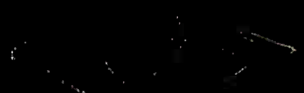

MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

The Illustrated
Encyclopedia
of Mythology, Religion
and the Unknown

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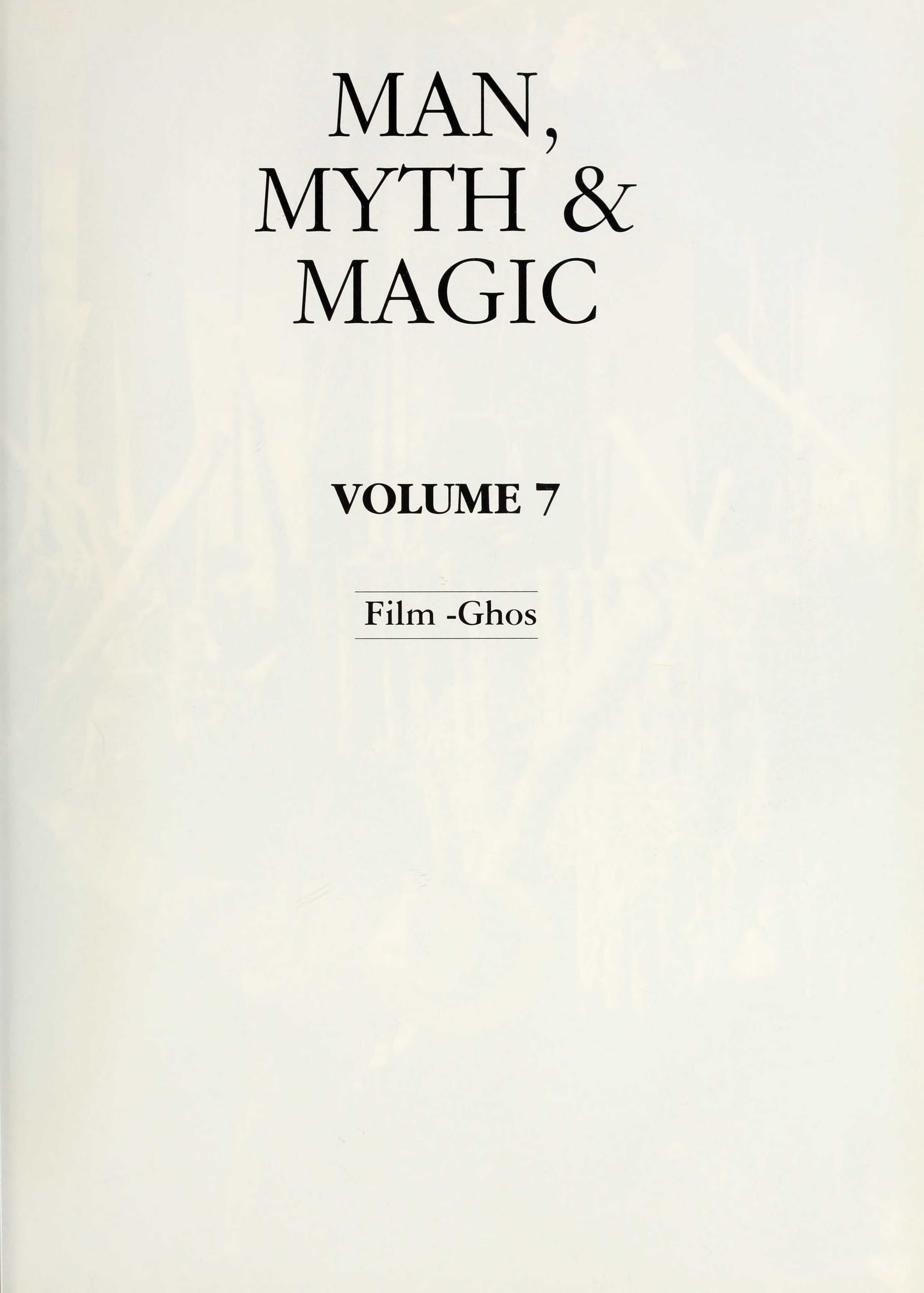

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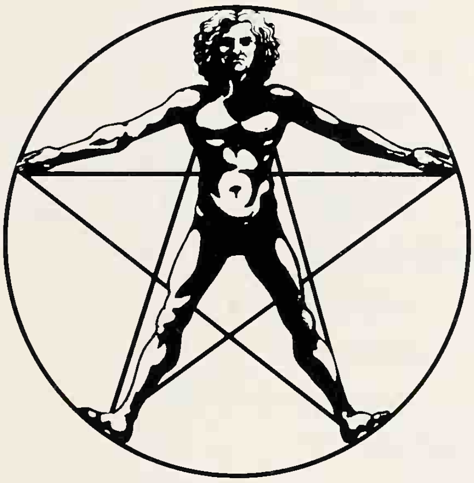

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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Richard Cavendish

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Frontispiece: Early Frankenstein films incorporated a sense of sin, of a divinity that was being sinned against. In *The Bride of Frankenstein* Boris Karloff turned the monster into a Christ-like martyr figure. (National Film Archive)

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FILMS

Christopher Lee as Dracula

...mummies and zombies, God and the Devil, Heaven and Hell, demonic (and sometimes alien) possession, death, reincarnation and immortality, angels, ghosts and saints, clairvoyance, telepathy and telekinesis, witches and warlocks, mediums and magicians, demons, poltergeists and nameless evils, werewolves, fiends and vampires...

It is impossible to fix a definition of supernatural cinema. It comes under the broad umbrella of fantasy films, but frequently overlaps horror and sci-fi. More often than not it reflects how we cope with the demons without and the demons within. Often it comments on how we view the credibility and authority of value systems – religious, moral, social and political

CINEMA IS ITSELF SUPERNATURAL; the unreality of what is happening on a moviescreen is – fantastic. Somewhere in the back of the building, a machine with a magnifying lens, a light bulb and a motor is passing from one reel to another a strip of celluloid, on which have been 'fixed' thousands of static images of scenes, scenes which have often been filmed in random order, and then painstakingly assembled to tell a story. Based as it is upon this hypernatural technology, the film is unrivalled in representing supernatural phenomena.

Supernatural cinema pursues the metaphors and symbolism of goblins and fairies, mummies and zombies, God and the Devil, Heaven and Hell, demonic (and sometimes alien) possession, death, reincarnation and immortality, angels, ghosts and saints, clairvoyance, telepathy and telekinesis, witches and warlocks, mediums and magicians, religion and mythology, demons, poltergeists and nameless evils, and metamorphosis into werewolves, fiends and vampires.

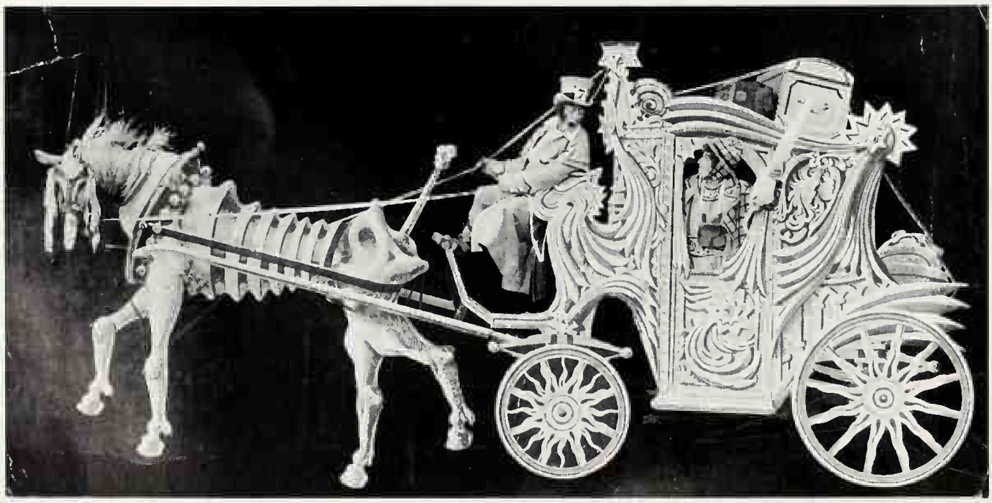
Science fiction is rather different; it begins in a different place. The supernatural element comes from another dimension, whereas aliens arrive from another part of the galaxy. Fifty-foot women and giant crabs belong to science fiction: they can be looked on as nature gone to extraordinary lengths. Very often a mad scientist or radioactive fall-out is responsible for the phenomena, or else some remote scientific possibility is brought into the here and now. Social realities are in this way examined and developed; but the supernatural explores fantasies and ideologies.

The Birth of the Fantasy Film

Movie-making has two main points of origin. The first people to project moving pictures which had been made on a celluloid strip were the Lumière brothers, who gave the first showing of their Cinématographe in March 1895. Theirs was the cinema of realism: the films were advertised as 'Workers Leaving the Factory', 'Watering the Gardener' (a naughty boy treads on the hose), and 'The Arrival of the Paris Express' – which left audiences cowering in their seats as the train swept across the screen. Early cinema-goers marvelled at the Lumières' spectral reflection of the world around them; their work was the foundation for documentaries and docu-dramas.

Also living in Paris was Georges Méliès, a magician who owned the Théâtre Robert-Houdin in Paris, where he staged miniature spectacles of conjuring and illusionism. He was so impressed with the Lumière shows that he furnished himself with a camera and a projector, and began to create his own magic movie shows – for Méliès was a showman, a lover of music-halls and carnivals. His first trick film was *The Vanishing Lady* (1896). In it a woman, seated on a stage, is covered with a cloth by a magician. When he removes the cloth, the woman has gone – and a skeleton appears in her place. The magician replaces the cloth – and the woman re-appears. An illusion of this kind is achievable, but only with great ingenuity, on the stage. In the film the effects could be obtained with relative ease by stopping the camera to adjust the scene being filmed.

George Méliès was a pioneer, not only in the cinema of fantasy, but in the development of stop-motion animation: still from his 1906 film, *The Merry Frolics of Satan*



Ronald Grant

Another of Méliès's films was the earliest vampire movie, *The Haunted Castle* (aka *The Devil's Manor*, 1896). A large bat flies into the castle hall and turns into Mephistopheles. From his cauldron there appears a girl in the company of a horde of skeletons, ghosts and witches. One of them holds up a crucifix, and the devil disappears in a puff of smoke. Méliès again had the devil appearing as a bat in *The Devil in the Convent* (1899). These early vampire movies were not the horrific stories of later years, however, but amusing fantasy tales.

Méliès was not only the pioneer in the cinema of illusion and fantasy, but his methods became the basis of animation and early special effects. Furthermore his stop-camera work was the direct forerunner of Ray Harryhausen's Dynamation stop-motion process, which created such screen classics as *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (1977) and *Clash of the Titans* (1981).

Frankenstein and Dracula

The early years of the century saw the first screen appearance of many fantasy figures: apart from the first outing of the monster in *Frankenstein* (1910) and the horror-film 'personae' Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in the German film *Ein Seltsamer Fall* (1914), there was the film debut of *The Werewolf* (1913), and *The Golem* (1914), a monster created when a statue is brought to life by magic. The 'classic' version of *The Golem*, by German director Paul Wegener, appeared in 1920, while the following year saw, in Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1921), the creation of one of cinema's most powerful supernatural

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Fantasy figures of early German cinema: the stone statue of the Golem comes to life in the classic 1920 version of the story by Paul Wegener *(left)*, and *(below)* the arch-vampire Count Orlok in Murnau's *Nosferatu;* nearly sixty years later Werner Hertzog re-created the character with Klaus Kinski *(above)*

images, that of the arch-vampire Count Orlok, with his bald head, white skin, sunken eyes, pointed ears and finger-length fingernails. Death also made an impressive appearance in Fritz Lang's *Der Meude Tod* (*Between Two Worlds*, 1921), when a young newlywed tries to reclaim her bridegroom from his gloomy realm.

From Gothic to the Gentle Ghost

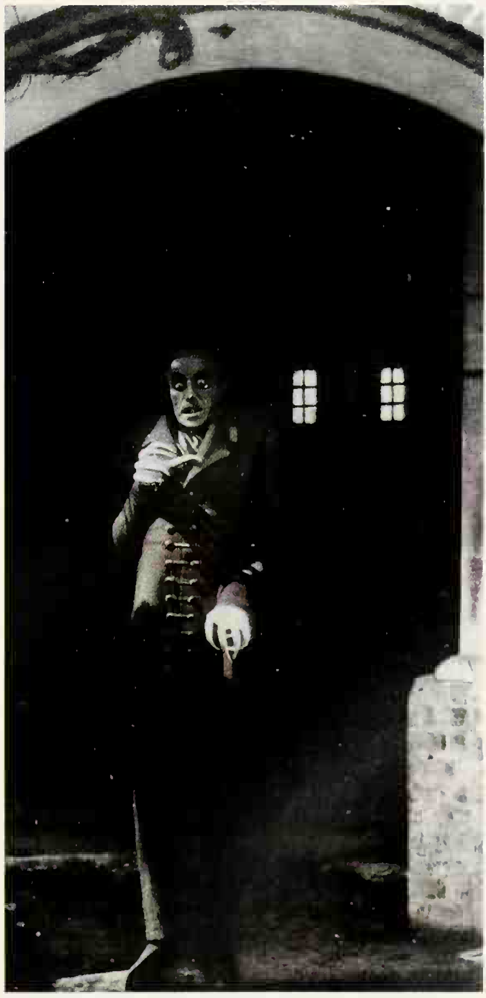
The 1930s were the heyday of the horror film. Monsters ruled the screen – many of them spawned by Universal studios after the enormous success of Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931) starring Bela Lugosi. This is a patchy film, with astonishingly powerful scenes interlaced with very flat episodes, but there were many 'magic moments', and Karl Freund's photography and Lugosi's caped and evening-suited appearance set a mood that has been imitated ever since. Dracula is cinema's second-most-screened fictional character, after Sherlock Holmes, with Frankenstein lying third.

By the 1940s, with World War II in full progress, reality had overtaken the wildest fantasies. Cinema turned from Gothic horror to a gentler examination of the supernatural. Its themes were friendly ghosts and angels and the afterlife. Comfort in bereavement and the hope of ongoing 'contact' with deceased loved ones, or else a heavenly reunion, were what production companies realised their audiences needed.

The success of *Topper* (1937), in which Constance Bennett and Cary Grant play the ghosts of a sophisticated couple who come to the aid of a troubled banker-friend, paved the way for a host of ghost movies – including two sequels, in the first of which Cary Grant was replaced by a dog, because he had become too expensive. One of the best of the 'ghosters' is Frank Capra's heart-warming *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), starring James Stewart as George Baily, a man contemplating suicide when his business collapses. Cuddly Clarence Oddbody, angel second-class, is sent down to earn his wings by showing Bailey how dreadful life for his friends and family would become if he died. Angel Dudley (Cary Grant) in *The Bishop's Wife* (1947) is an urbanely charming heavenly messenger who arrives in answer to the prayers of Bishop Brougham (David Niven), his mission to solve the bishop's problems and restore his flagging faith.

A delightful British ghost-movie was David Lean's 1945 version of Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*. The theme was that only as a ghost can one achieve true and lasting love (a notion which, hopefully, comforted war-widows everywhere). Kay Hammond played the playful ghost who mischievously re-enters the life of her erstwhile husband (Rex Harrison) during a seance, and proceeds to vex his second wife (Constance Bennett). Splendid though this trio was, the show was stolen by marvellous character-actress Margaret Rutherford playing the gloriously dotty medium, Madame Arcati.

Ernst Lubitsch's *Heaven Can Wait* (1943) has a devoted but easily distracted husband (Don Ameche) arriving in Hades, convinced that this is his hereafter home – but Satan



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Four very different kinds of supernatural visitation *Left* Edward Van Sloan and Bela Lugosi set the style for a dozen variations in Tod Browning's 1931 production of *Dracula*; Cary Grant was an urbanely charming angel in *The Bishop's Wife* in 1947 *(top)*; while the Japanese *Kwaidan* (1964) is crowded with ghosts *(above)*, quite unlike those encountered by the *Ghostbusters (facing page)*

decides the new boy isn't nearly as naughty as he thinks, and sends him Upstairs.

Warren Beatty's 1968 version of *Heaven Can Wait* was, in fact, a remake of *Here Comes Mr Jordan* (1941), which spawned many imitations. In it, a boxer ends up in Heaven ahead of his time, because of a bureaucratic error, and has to be found new lodgings in another body back on Earth, where his old one has been cremated. Beatty's version was popular, but not nearly as good as the original, starring Robert Montgomery as the boxer and Claude Rains as the archangel who gets him resettled.

Rains crossed the line in 1946 to play a roguish Devil, in *Angel on My Shoulder* (1946), who promises a dead gangster a new lease of life if he will return to earth to take over the body of a worthy judge who is trying to stamp out crime. Indeed, few stars escaped this life and death cycle. Ghostly parts were assigned to such unlikely contenders as Jennifer Jones, Rex Harrison, Charles Laughton, Danny Kaye, Spencer Tracy and William Powell.

The Devil was played as sinisterly suave by Ray Milland in *Alias Nick Beal* (1941), and as a cunning 'hick' by Walter Huston in William Dieterle's excellent *All that Money can Buy* (aka *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, 1941). As for angels, even Jack Benny played one: the angel Athanael in *The Horn Blows at Midnight* (1945), in which he is sent down from Heaven to blow the Last Trump. And tall, gangling comic Jacques Tati starred in his only straight acting role in *Sylvie et le Fantôme* (*Sylvia and the Ghost*, 1950), about a young girl who befriends the ghost of a man who died in the duel he fought for love of her grandmother.

Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* (1961) is an outstandingly scary British ghost movie, shot in black-and-white Cinemascope by Freddie Francis. It is adapted from Henry James's novel *The Turn of the Screw*, in which a Victorian governess (Deborah Kerr) comes to believe that her young wards have been possessed by the ghosts of their former governess and her evil lover. The atmosphere surrounding the turreted manor is hauntingly and hair-raisingly sinister.

Japanese Ghosts

Kwaidan (1964) is a set of four Japanese ghost-stories directed by Masaki Kobayashi. One of the episodes, 'Hoichi, the Earless', tells of a blind young monk who is a talented musician and who is summoned every night by the ghostly warriors of the Helke clan to sing the saga of their final battle, an ordeal which causes him to become weak and frail. When the other monks discover what is happening, they paint him all over with sacred writings, so that the ghost won't be able to see him. However, they forget to paint his ears, which the angry ghost messenger tears from his head. The visual backgrounds to all the stories are extraordinarily beautiful, and Kobayashi took equal care over the soundtrack. The composer Toru Takemitsu chose, as the basis of his music, a different sound for each episode; wood being split, pebbles being struck together, the non-verbal vocal music that accompanies Noh drama, and the playing of the banjo-like *samisen*. All add to the extraordinarily unsettling ambience of the film.

The popularity of ghost tales continues. Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice* (1988) became an instant cult movie. It tells of a ghostly young couple, happily haunting their old home, who are appalled by the crass family who move in. In desperation they seek the help of Betelgeuse (Michael Keaton), who is an 'alternative' exorcist – that is, he rids houses of unwanted humans.

Ghostbusters (1984) came up with a winning formula: a crackpot cast and story, a cheery line in comedy, gloriously disgusting ghosts, and a chart-topping title-track. The 1989 sequel, understandably, couldn't compete. And Jerry Zuckor's *Ghost* was one of the hits of 1990. A loving couple are separated when the man (Patrick Swayze) is murdered. However, he has to stay around to find a way of warning his beloved (Demi Moore) that she is in similar danger. Whoopi Goldberg plays the outrageous medium who helps the lovers reconnect.

The beginning of the 1950s had seen the end of the kitsch and charisma of harp-

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string movies; fear of the nuclear bomb – together with fear of McCarthyism – moved into the studios and cinemas in its place. For several years, far-fetched sci-fi and post-holocaust movies abounded, before a return to horror and the supernatural, in the form of such gems as *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957), an 'all-time, zero-budgeted schlock classic' which many directors and screenwriters of the *Star Wars* era and beyond cheerfully claim as a seminal influence.

The Threat of Television

But for a time 50s cinema was in trouble, and the problem was television. However, TV was small-screen and black-and-white, and the cinema set about pulling people back into its seats. It toyed with the panoramic (but expensive) magnitude of Cinerama before settling for dazzling, action-packed epics in CinemaScope and VistaVision. It also re-introduced 3-D, mainly as a gimmick, and for a while everything on the screen appeared to be flying at the audience. King of supernatural tricks was the producer William Castle. Like Méliès, he was a showman. *The House on Haunted Hill* (1958), a tricksy ghost story, featured 'Emergo': as a skeleton rose from Vincent Price's cauldron of boiling acid, a 'live' skeleton rattled out over the audience's heads. For *13 Ghosts* (1960) Castle created 'Illusion-O'. Cinemagoers were given a card containing a red filter – a 'ghost viewer' – and a blue filter – a 'ghost remover' for those too frightened to watch any more.

The 1960s, and the emergence of the 'permissive' society, saw the return of blood-and-lust vampire movies. Hammer Films, Britain's 'House of Horror', followed up the great success of Terence Fisher's *Dracula* (aka *House of Horror*, 1958), starring Peter Cushing as the vampire hunter and Christopher Lee – who became an instant sex symbol – as the demonically dashing Count Dracula. Cushing came back to fight Dracula's disciples in *The Brides of Dracula* (1960). Neither actor appeared in one of Hammer's best, *The Kiss of the Vampire* (1962), but Lee returned in Terence Fisher's *Dracula Prince of Darkness* (1965), and turned in a powerfully evil performance – the more notable for his having no dialogue.

Lee went on to play other demons in British, American, West German and Italian films. Italy was producing its own strong strand of vampire movies. Mario Bava directed *Black Sunday* (1960) – which made a cult movie star of English actress Barbara Steele – *Black Sabbath* (1963) and *Planet of tbe Vampires* (1965). And in every land spoofs began to appear, such as *Munster, Go Home* (1966), Britain' s *Carry On Screaming* and Roman Polanski's *Dance of the Vampires* (1967).

The popularity of vampire movies has continued and they became ever more erotic. Lesbian vampires abounded, as in the stylish *Daughters of Darkness* (1971) where it is never clear whether the glamorous Countess Bathory (Delphyne Seyrig) is responsible for the bloody murders that seem to surround her and her female lover.

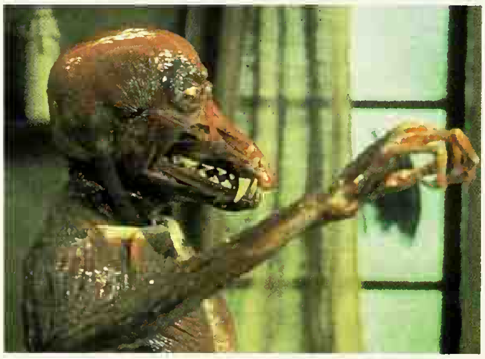
But, for women otherwise inclined, Frank Langella provided a veritable pin-up of a Count in John Badham's beautiful but rather predictable *Dracula* of 1979, while George Hamilton was handsome and funny in *Love at First Bite* (1979). This Dracula has to flee to New York when a People's Commissar from Transylvania commandeers his castle as a public gymnasium. Hamilton makes the most of a sparkling script. He ends up happily in bed, murmuring to his female companion, 'Oh, that's so kinky! Are *you* biting *me*?'

Variations on the vampire theme proliferated. Hertzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979) was a remake of Murnau' s original (1922), with Klaus Kinski as the blood-stealer. Then there was *Blacula* (1972) in which an African prince (William Marshall) is bitten by Dracula and imprisoned in a coffin which is shipped to Los Angeles, whereupon he emerges and does his bit for equal bite-rights. In *Deafula* (1975), a theology student, played by the film's writer-director Peter Wechsberg, is infected by Dracula before birth, and in due course turns into Deafula. Wechsberg is deaf, and the whole movie was filmed in sign-language with voice-over commentary.

Vampires Rampant

The 1980s were the decade of the teenage vampire. *The Lost Boys* (1987), the tale of a Californian leather-jacketed teen-vamp gang, was very popular (and spawned a sequel), though far from the best. Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark* (1987), about farm-boy Caleb who gets caught up with a sleazy

Vampires and werewolves have been a recurrent theme throughout the history of the cinema *Above* climactic scene from *Taste the Blood of Dracula* and *(right)* an even bloodier episode from *An American Werewolf in London*. Special makeup effects are essential to films of the supernatural *Below* Two blood-curdling examples from *Company of Wolves*



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gang of night-wandering gypsy vampires, is far better. *Vamp* (1986) is very funny. Some teenage boys, looking for 'stripper' entertainment, fall into Grace Jones's After Dark club. Soon they discover that all its occupants are vampires.

In the 1990s, vampire films almost drove gangster movies from the screen. *DEF by Temptation* (1990) is, in effect, 'Rapula'. It was billed as 'the black rap chiller thriller of the decade', in which a sexy New York vampire sets out to seduce an innocent country preacher. *Sorority House of Vampires* (1992), a vampire tale with an ecological message, reveals that a major natural disaster (earthquake or tidal wave) occurs every time a vampire 'claims' a victim. It parallels vampirism with big business, claiming that both suck out the Earth's lifeblood.

Then there was *The Addams Family* (1991), with Anjelica Huston as Morticia, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992), the beautiful *Moon Legend* (1991) from Hong Kong, the two-and-a-half-hour *Bandh Darwaza* (1990) – an Indian vampire musical – Clive Barker' s *Nightbreed* (1990) and, of course, Francis Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. This hyper-promoted movie featured Gary Oldman as a man seeking revenge for the death of his wife (in 1462) and someone to rekindle his heart in the present (1982). However, Van Helsing (Anthony Hopkins) is always there to stop him. Following this came Neil Jordan's adaptation of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, starring Tom Cruise as the vampire Lestat.

Enter the Zombies

Back in the 70s, the supernatural and science fiction had begun to combine. The undead were still a primary theme, but the flavour of the decade was the zombie. This would seem to have resulted from a fusion of a heyday in the development of special effects – especially 'splatter-movie' make-up – and a growing obsession with the body beautiful. Zombies had been around in movies for decades, but the 70s – continuing into the 80s – saw them getting out of hand. No longer were graveyards and tropical islands the only places stocked with sepulchral creatures who refused to die.

The zombie boom was triggered by George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), a painfully bleak and frightening film that was shot in grainy black and white. (Tom Savini's 1992 remake, although instigated and produced by Romero, and benefitting from Savini's masterly make-up effects, nevertheless lacked some vital ingredient.) Romero made two superb sequels. *Dawn of the Dead* (aka *Zombies*, 1979), in vibrant colour, takes place in the environment where the protagonists in their pre-zombie lives had known greatest happiness – a vast shopping mall. The second, *Day of the Dead*, is set in a bunker, the secret hideaway of a research team who are trying to domesticate zombies. In this film, most of the living are as devoid of soul as the undead.

Other ghoulish titles included *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue* (1974) and *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979), but one of the best was the Canadian *Dead of Night* (aka *Deathdream*, 1972), in which a young soldier is killed in action (presumably in Vietnam), but returns from the grave to cause havoc in his home town.

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Several supernatural films involve diabolic children *Above* Lee Remick, in *The Omen*, clasps her adopted son, the Satanic Damian *Below* Mia Farrow learns the ghastly truth in *Rosemary's Baby*

The 1980s saw director Sam Raimi well set on a zombie course. *Evil Dead* (1982) and *Evil Dead II* quickly became cult movies, although the third in the series, *Army of Darkness* (1992), lacks the terror of the first or the humour of the second.

Being soulless, zombies hold no interest for the Devil. However, he can always find plenty to occupy him. In *The Devil Rides Out* (1967), one of Terence Fisher's finest films for Hammer Horror, based on the novel by Dennis Wheatley, Christopher Lee (this time the good guy) constructs a magic pentagram to protect a family from demonic invasion. The nightlong battle against Satanic forces is an accomplished exercise in occult drama, and the film has, over the years, become an established cult favourite.

The following year produced another cult classic, Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), based on Ira Levin's Satanist thriller. It is a Faustian tale in which Rosemary's husband (John Cassavetes) buys success from the Devil, not at the price of his soul but in exchange for his wife (Mia Farrow) giving birth to the Antichrist.

Rosemary endures a pregnancy full of pain and nightmares, with a growing terrifying realization that all is not as it should be with her husband and her invasively protective neighbours the Castavets (with Ruth Gordon at her bizarre best as Mrs Castavet). Attempts to escape fail, and she finally sinks into a heavily drugged labour. When she regains consciousness, she is told the child is dead, but on entering the Castavet's apartment she finds the baby surrounded by members of a worshipping coven. Rosemary's attempts to retain a grip on her sanity when all about her are aligning themselves on the other side are masterfully orchestrated by Polanski.

Satanic Children

The demonic possession of a 12-year-old girl (Linda Blair) was the plotline for one of the most commercially successful of all horror movies, *The Exorcist* (1973). As a result of the take-over she levitates, spews up green bile, masturbates with a crucifix, spins her head round full-circle, 'persuades' the exorcist-priest Father Damien to throw himself out of a window – and caused many parents to gasp with horror while their offspring writhed with glee. For *Exorcist II: The Heretic*, director William Friedkin was replaced by John Boorman, who made a 'meaningful' film – so it did not nearly so well. *The Exorcist III* finds, in an insane asylum, someone very like the dead Father Damien, who is possessed with the urge to commit serial murders. This is a chilling tale, with some mega-volt shocks.

Another Satanic child, and another Damien (Harvey Stevens), also did very well at the box-office in *The Omen* (1976). This Damien is subtle about his demonic nature. He has himself adopted by a couple (Gregory Peck and Lee Remick) and kills off their expected baby – and anyone who suspects his devilish nature. Public enthusiasm led to two sequels: *Damien – Omen II* (1978) and *The Final Conflict* (1981).

Alan Parker's noirish *Angel Heart* (1987) has a very different flavour. It follows the machinations of a powerfully persuasive Devil in the shape of Louis Cyphre, a compelling performance from Robert De Niro. He takes possession of detective Harry Angel (Mickey Rourke), hiring him to track down a missing man, but the search draws Angel into a series of occult dramas and ritual murders, until he discovers that the man he is searching for is himself.

Lycanthropy is a different form of possession. After *The Werewolf* in 1913 there was a long lull until *The Werewolf of London* (1934). Then Lon Chaney Jr took over the role in 1941 as *The Wolf Man*. Werewolves appeared occasionally throughout the next three decades, but the 80s found them back in vogue. *The Howling* (1980) tells of a TV anchorwoman who has a nervous breakdown following a traumatic episode. Convalescing in a rest home, she discovers that a colony of werewolves is also in residence there. This impressive supernatural thriller was director Joe Dante's run-up to *Gremlins* (1984).

John Landis's *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) tells of two young Americans, David and Jack, who are hitchhiking across England when they are attacked by a werewolf. The beast tears Jack to pieces and he dies, but David is only wounded and wakes up three weeks later in hospital. There a horribly disfigured (but very funny) Jack 'appears' to suggest to David that he should commit suicide because he is about to become a werewolf. Special-effects makeup maestro Rick Baker created Jack's hideous gaping wounds and David's subsequent furry, fanged persona. There are many subtle changes in his transformation, and each stage of David's make-up took around eight hours to apply.

Albert Finney became entangled in full-moon frolics in *Wolfen* (1981). He played a detective convinced that a series of savage New York murders has been committed by wolves. He eventually discovers that the killers are the *wolfen*, a race of mutated American Indian hunters who retreated into their own netherworld in despair at the bleak prospects for humankind.

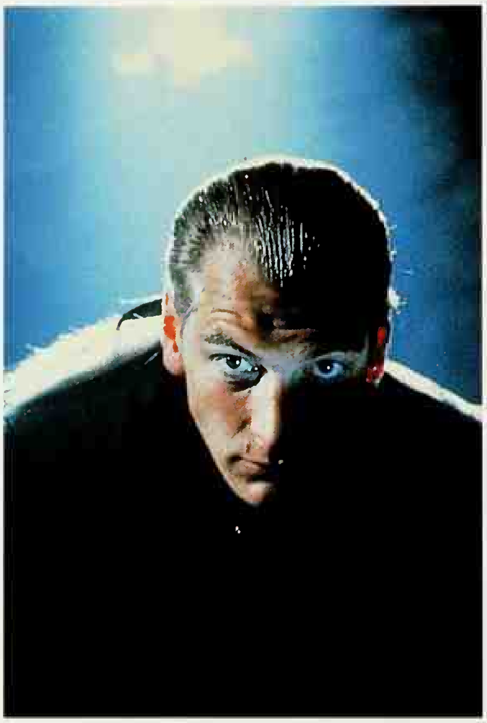
Wolves, Witches and Warlocks

In his adaptation of Angela Carter's novel, Neil Jordan, often a teller of grim tales, unfolds a wondrous fairy story in *The Company of Wolves* (1984). It spins the fable of a young girl's dreams and fantasies, of wolves, and of men whose eyebrows meet in the middle and who are hairy on the inside. This is a sensual and a sexual movie, and a triumph of costume, design and special make-up effects.

Tangling with the demonic took on an altogether lighter tone in *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987). Three lovely ladies (Cher, Susan Sarandon and Michelle Pfeiffer – a brunette, a redhead and a blonde), discover they can pool their natural 'powers' to conjure up the man of their dreams. And who should that be but the devilishly charming Daryl Van Horne (Jack Nicholson)? Soon each of the women is pregnant with a potential little devil. They decide to take control of the situation, and put their fallen angel in his proper place.

Witches, wizards and warlocks turn up in unexpected places. From a coven hidden away in a seaside hotel, and led by the Grand High Witch (Anjelica Huston), *The Witches* (1989) intend to turn the children of Britain into mice. Nicholas Roeg directed this highly-charged Roald Dahl story, and Jim Henson's Muppet team provided the special effects.

In *Warlock* (1988), Julian Sands plays an evil Satanic priest attempting to escape a witch-finder (Richard E. Grant), who is getting too close for comfort, by switching centuries from 17th-century Massachusetts to modern Los Angeles. He 'arrives' in the appartment of a very surprised waitress (Lori Singer), only to find that his pursuer has taken the next time-express and is right behind him. A sinister battle ensues.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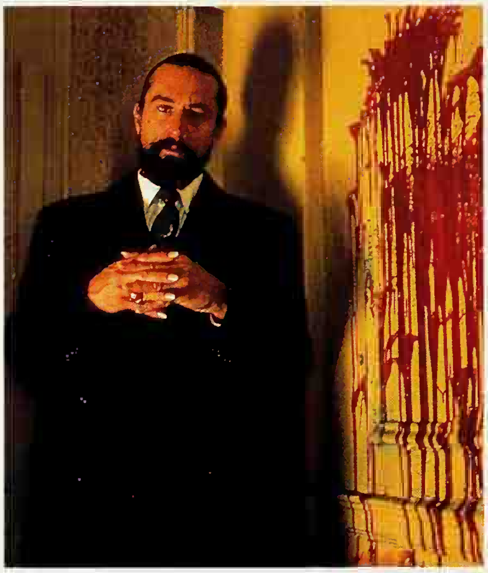
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Evil comes in many guises: in *Warlock* Julian Sands is a Satanic 17th-century priest *(top)*, while in *Angel Heart* the Devil, Robert De Niro *(above)*, is a suave businessman who draws Mickey Rourke into a terrifying hunt for himself

In a lighter vein, Walt Disney had a soft spot for witches and wizards. Apart from the wicked-witch godmothers and stepmothers of his animated features, there is *Mary Poppins* (1964), who would have been a perfect Edwardian nanny if she could have kept the magic in her feet under control. *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971) features Angela Lansbury as an apprentice witch, and *Hocus Pocus* (1993) stars Bette Midler as Winifred, one of three nasty reincarnated witch sisters who plan, at Halloween, to steal the souls of trick-or-treating children so they can live forever.

Evidence of the sure place of the supernatural on the cinema screen in recent years can be found in the number of cinema and TV films (over 30) based on the novels, stories and original screenplays of Stephen King. It must be said that very few of these films in any way matches the power and inventiveness of King's original writing. Nevertheless, his stories provide themes that cover almost every aspect of the supernatural, albeit in a horror context, and the fact that producers are so eager to make 'Stephen King' movies shows the appetite of the 90s audience for the supernatural.

King's career was launched by Brian De Palma's movie of King's novel *Carrie* (1976), about a young woman who resorts to telekinesis when the world proves too unfriendly – as does the heroine of *Firestarter* (1984). *Salem's Lot* (1979) is a vampire-run New England Town; *The Shining* (1980) is the 'second sight' that a demonic hotel wants to steal from a little boy; *The Dead Zone* (1983) has a hero cursed with clairvoyance and telepathy; *Christine* (1983) is a demonic car which takes possession of her teenage owner; *Silver Bullet* (1985) is a werewolf tale; *Pet Semetary* (1989) boasts a zombie child (and a zombie cat); *Sleepwalkers* (1992) metamorphose from human to pre-feline vampires; *The Dark Half* (1993) tells of an author pursued by the murderous reincarcation of the half of himself that he had buried – his thriller-writing pseudonym; and *Needful Things* (1993) has the Devil visiting Castle Rock, Maine, and turning good neighbours into vengeful murderers.

King's tales (with the exceptions that prove the rule) are firmly rooted in one of the major ingredients of successful supernatural fiction – everyday normality. Once the audience is safely settled in some ordinary little town, then, and only then, do doors start to creak...

Suspended Disbelief

A film with a supernatural theme can employ devices unique to cinema and present changes and distortions of reality in an unparalleled fashion. It is a marvellous medium for representing alternative versions of reality and what lies above and beyond the natural. Movies and the supernatural have been bedfellows since the earliest days. And, over the decades, as the unbelievable has become commonplace, so new visions and versions of the supernatural have come into being.

Cinema has great advantages in dealing with the supernatural. Cinemagoers are isolated in the dark, yet sharing a common atmosphere of cosy vulnerability that is highly conducive to suspending disbelief and allowing the almost unimaginable to divert or terrify. Cinema has that mesmeric potential; and it has the ability to conjure up the intangible and unseen in concrete, visible, moving form – to turn the unreal into the reel.

ANN LLOYD

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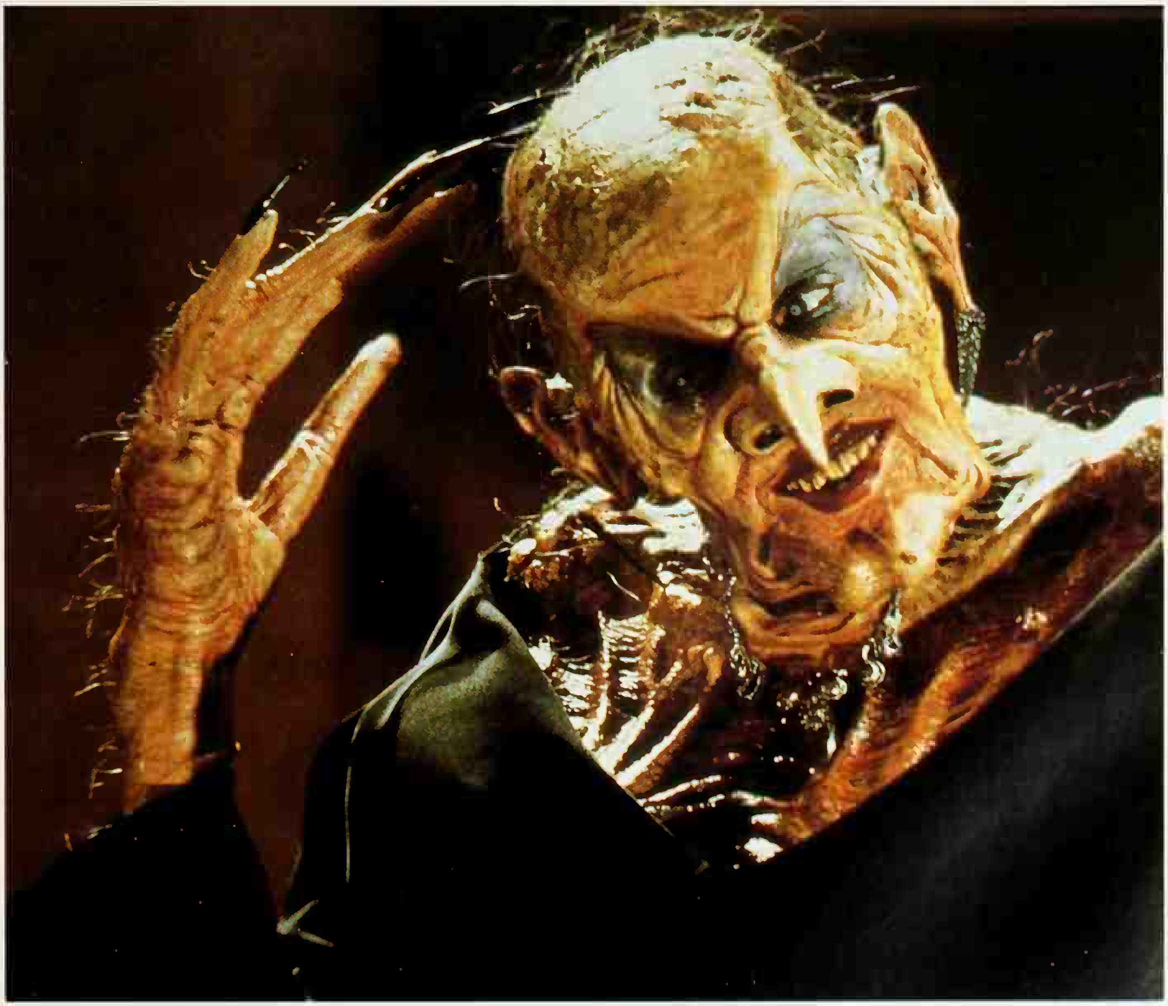

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Top Cher, Susan Sarandon and Michelle Pfeiffer discover the surprising strength of their powers in *The Witches of Eastwick*, and use them to conjure up the man of their dreams in the person of the devilishly charming Jack Nicholson *Right* A striking example of modern makeup techniques: Anjelica Huston as the Grand High Witch in *The Witches*, who leads a coven, hidden in a seaside hotel, who are dedicated to turning the unsuspecting children of Britain into mice *(above)*

FINDING OF WITCHES

AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE between witchcraft and sorcery in tribal societies (possibly also in pre-Christian Europe), and witchcraft in the Christian era is reflected in methods of finding witches and sorcerers.

Tribal beliefs in witchcraft attempted to explain why it was that, at a particular moment and in a particular place, a particular person suffered a particular misfortune – such as disease, the death of kin or animal stock, accident, the blighting of crops, and so on – when he had previously not been thus unfortunate and his fellows were still enjoying good luck. His ill-fortune was ascribed to the malevolence of a personal enemy, operating by occult or supernatural powers. But witchcraft was not the only possible hidden occult cause of such events: gods and other spirits, or ancestral spirits, or breach of taboo, might be the mysterious cause of ill-fortune.

Witches and sorcerers harmed those against whom they felt envy and jealousy, spite, malice, hatred or anger. The ancestral gods usually sent misfortune to either a wrongdoer who had broken a rule of morality which came under their surveillance, or one who had failed to render to them appropriate offerings or sacrifices.

Oracles and Ordeals

Different tribal societies ascribed misfortunes to various occult causes in varying degrees: among the Azande of the Sudan it was primarily witchcraft which was blamed; among the Tallensi of Ghana it was ancestral spirits or the earth goddess; among the Bantu of South Africa it was equally witchcraft or the ancestral spirits – though in all these societies there was some element of all these, and yet other, beliefs. Sometimes the occult cause of a misfortune was indicated by its very nature, but mostly it had to be sought by some form of divination or oracle, the latter of which might involve an ordeal.

There were many forms of divination. Some were mechanical devices, while others involved direct searching by specialist magicians (usually called witch-doctors, but better named, following J. A. Barnes, witch-detectives). These magicians were often believed to be helped or possessed by spirits, frequently ancestral, who spoke through them, in their search for occult causes. The most famous of all were the Greek oracles of Apollo at Delphi and of Zeus at Dodona. Tribal diviners of this time, commonly called shamans after the Siberian model, were also of this type.

Evans-Pritchard's illuminating study of the systems of belief among the Azande (see AZANDE) analysed the hierarchy of divinatory and oracular mechanisms. When a Zande suffered a misfortune, he was likely first to consult a rubbing-board oracle: it was believed that the boards stuck at the name of any man who might be the witch causing that particular misfortune. Or he might put two different kinds of twigs into a termite's nest, with the name of a suspected witch, and depending on which was the more eaten he received confirmation or not of his suspicion.

The most important form of Zande oracle involved giving a chicken a certain substance – a form of strychnine – which had to be collected with much hardship in enemy territory. Questions were put to the oracle-substance in the chicken; and the answer was 'no' or 'yes' depending on whether the form of the question called for the chicken to vomit the substance or to die.

If the misfortune were a continuing one, the consultant could then, through a neutral intermediary, send the wing of a chicken to a man thus accused of being the witch responsible. The accused had to blow water over the wing and state that, if it was his witchcraft which was at work, he was not aware of this, and by blowing cold water he 'cooled' his witchcraft. (Witchcraft in this context was a substance in the intestines, whose power could go out and harm others when it was animated by malevolent feelings, even if the alleged witch did not intend it to; immoral feelings set witchcraft power to work.) Should a man thus accused refuse to blow water, and merely assert his innocence, it would be taken as proof of his obdurate guilt.

The death of a kinsman on the father's side demanded that his fellows take vengeance. The verdict of their oracle had to be confirmed by the chief's oracle, and the person held by the chief's oracle to be responsible for a death had to pay compensation. However, after the then Anglo-Egyptian joint government prohibited such payments, the social demand for vengeance persisted, and the kin of the dead person made magic against the unknown witch responsible for the death: whenever any person died in the neighbourhood, the kin asked the oracle if they had been killed by the vengeance magic. If their oracle said 'yes', confirmation had to be obtained from the chief's oracles before they could cease mourning, with their vengeance completed.

Azande sometimes organized seances at which one or more witch-detectives would dance to work up the power of their magical substances, detect particular witches at work, or clear away a threat of witchcraft from around the organizer of the seance. He might give the witch-detective in advance the names of those he suspected.

The Personal Grudge

Certain important facts become clear in discussing the finding of witches and the threat of witchcraft within a single society. First, we see that in the example of most Azande techniques the sufferer controls the names of the persons put to the oracle, so that he is likely to point out some person who has a grudge against him, or against whom he has a grudge, as the cause of his misfortune. For this reason many early observers of these systems of belief and action considered them to be fraudulent. But we must remember that for people who believed in the system in which they had been reared, it seemed very reasonable that personal enemies should be responsible for one's misfortunes; and since one was deeply concerned to avoid the misfortune, one had a greater interest than anyone else in detecting the responsible witch accurately.

When a diviner or oracle spoke directly, in a trance, or through a possessing spirit, the clients were obviously much less in control of the course of divination. Such diviners – like the oracle-substance of the Zande, which could not be in human control (as the rubbing-board oracle might be) – were more trusted than others.

In most of the tribal societies described, witches were considered most likely to be relatives of the actual victim, or of the person who was guardian of the victim. More recent researches have brought out that each divination might have to be understood in terms of a long process of development of social relationships, as sections of a village or large group of kinsfolk, or individuals, competed for positions of authority over the whole. Hence one section might reject a divination acceptable to another, and go to its own diviner; or a divination acceptable at one time might be rejected some time later, and quite a different occult cause postulated for the misfortune.

Witch-Hunts in the West

The search for witches in tribal societies was quite different from the great witch-hunts in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, or the outbreak of accusations at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692. In tribal societies accusations of witchcraft were specific to particular social relationships; these might be set in the development of relationships within a group of relatives, bound together with strong sentiments of love and co-operation, but also involved in competition for positions of authority and limited resources. A witch was usually a witch with reference to the particular misfortunes of a particular person; and other persons might not be interested in the question. But in the European hunts for witches the whole community, and more particularly the Church, would be deeply involved. For witchcraft was closely identified with heresy, and with Jewry, and in some areas with Islam; and it was the task of the Church to root out heretics and witches.

After being denounced by some accuser, witches were then subjected to torture, under which they both confessed and implicated others as partners with them in the witches' sabbath. Alleged spectral visions of others and admissions against themselves extracted under torture were the principal evidence; and those judges who showed any leniency, or thinkers who might question the sense of the outburst, became suspect themselves. The only ordeals akin to those in tribal societies required the thrusting of the arm into hot water and then judgement of its effects, or throwing the suspect into a pond: if she floated it was the Devil who bore her up, if she sank she was innocent, and lucky if she was rescued before being drowned.

It is true that the kinds of fantasies produced by persons subjected to torture who made confessions in European witch-trials, or the standardized beliefs and allegations of their accusers, bear similarities to the beliefs in tribal societies about the activities of the witches: riding in the air on familiars or objects, going naked, committing incest and indulging in sexual promiscuity, and so on. But the sociological settings of these forms of witchcraft were quite diverse, and so therefore were the methods of detecting witchcraft and witches. Some of those who observed the witch-hunts in Europe or in Salem commented that they reflected village hatreds and malice; and we have seen that malevolent motives in tribal personal relationships were believed to inspire witches to do harm. But this similarity of motives is too trivial to help us make sense of the quite different social and cultural systems of belief and action which share them, while the similitude of fantasies can be understood better by examining the limited number of emotional and moral themes open to human beings in society. Hence the witchcraft and the witch-detecting of tribal societies and of the Christian world need to be understood in very different contexts, despite superficial similarities.

Divining bowls are used for detecting witches in various parts of Africa *Right* Divining bowl from Sierra Leone: from the British Museum *Below* Wooden bowl used by the Venda tribe in South Africa: the cowrie shell carved in the centre represents the spirit of the mother

Axel Poignant

British Museum

The outbreaks of witch-finding cults which periodically have swept through parts of Africa seem to be at least a first stage in the spiritual reaction of small-scale societies to their absorption in the economy and organization of the expanding Western world: hence they are in some ways akin to the situations of European witch-hunts, or the Salem trials. But they were not carried out in the name of a Christian orthodoxy, nor did they hunt directly for witches. They demanded that their adherents purify their hearts and get rid of their charms of witchcraft and magic and, lacking the support of an organized Church and being opposed by government, they were far less searching or punitive. They appear to have been succeeded by millenary cults, which echoed Judaeo-Christian ideologies, but which included generally the idea of cleansing one's heart of vicious feelings against one's neighbours, and in societies which had indigenous beliefs in witchcraft this entailed cleansing one's heart of witchcraft. Hence we can describe them as a community method of finding out witches – and at the same time curing them of their evil.

(See also AZANDE; SHAMANISM.)

MAX GLUCKMAN

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Each of your fingers was supposed to have a special significance in popular lore, and the exact position of a white spot on a certain nail foretold an event in the future

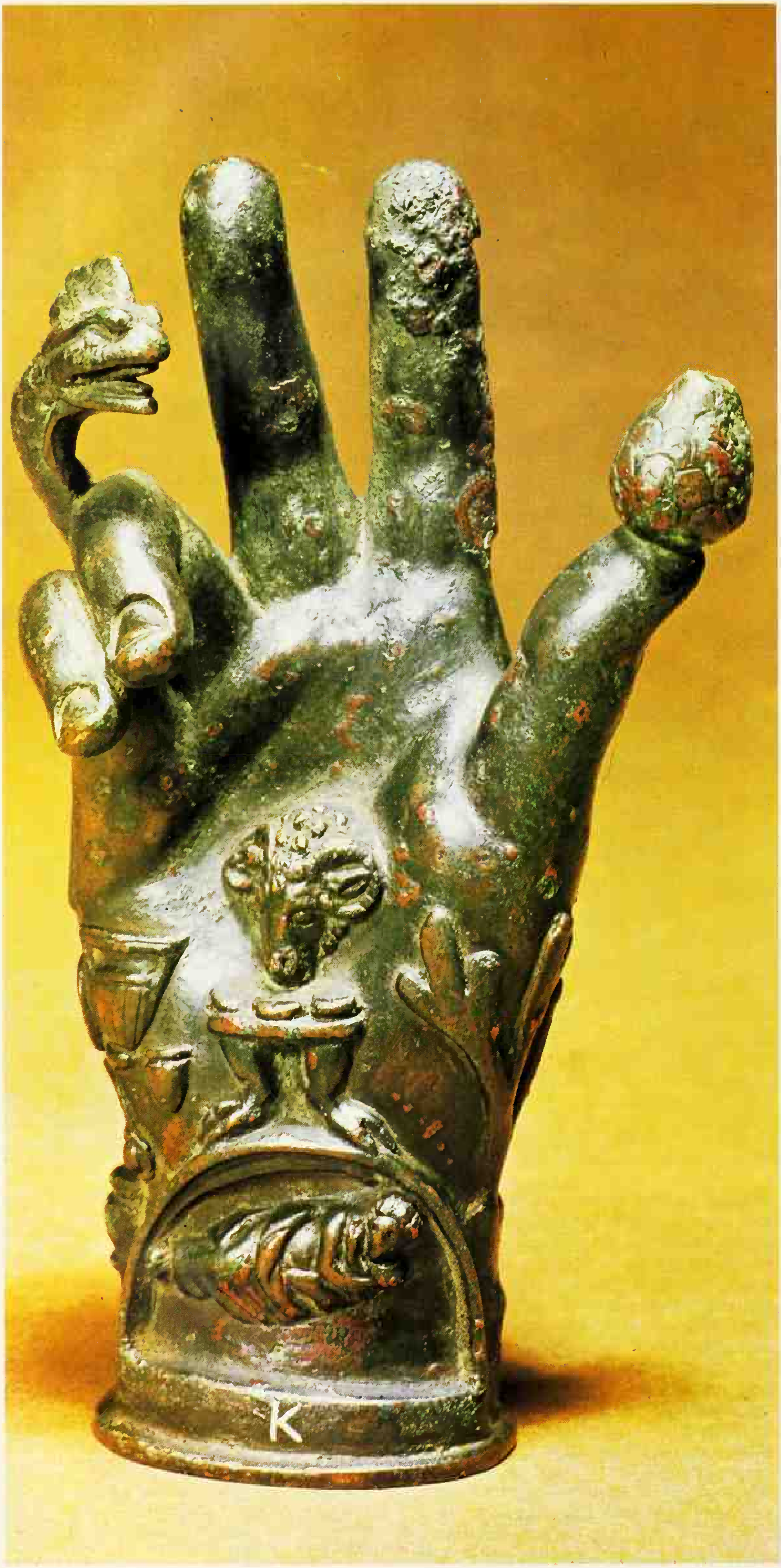
FINGERS

THE FINGERS OF THE HAND, which was man's first weapon and tool, have long symbolized in myth and religion both physical and spiritual power, with the added significance that the number five, sum of the fingers and thumb, is the symbol of humanity, health and love. From ancient times the fingers have played their part in the mysteries of religion and magic. Christ speaks of casting out devils with 'the finger of God' (Luke 11.20). In the world's religions it is an accepted principle that power may be communicated through the sensitive finger-tips, a belief that underlies Christian ordination and confirmation, and finds further expression in the legends of saints whose fingers gave forth fire and radiance, while certain clairvoyants lay claim to the power of seeing by means of the finger-tips. Pagan purification rites were often performed with the middle finger; while Moses dipped a finger in the blood of a bullock at a sacrificial ceremony. In early Christian times protection against demons and other hostile psychic influences was sought by inscribing an imaginary cross upon the forehead with the forefinger.

In English country lore each finger was given its individual name: Towcher for the index finger, Long-man for the middle finger, Lech-man or ring finger or gold-finger for the fourth, and Little-man for the small finger; the thumb was called Thuma.

The healing power of the fingers provides one of the most ancient of psychic endowments, the best known examples being the treatment of the King's Evil, and the cures of the famous 17th century mystic, Valentine Greatrakes, who achieved his remarkable successes by stroking the sick with his fingers, which he claimed enabled him to 'restore temperament of the debilitate parts and reinvigorate the blood' (see FAITH HEALING). In folk tradition the third finger of the left hand, or ring finger, has the power to cure a wound by the act of stroking. This finger is supposed to have a direct link with the heart.

There is a widespread belief that the index finger, known as the poison finger, must not be used to touch any wound as it will then never heal. According to an Oxfordshire tradition the index finger is also known as the 'witch' or 'cursing' finger; among the Negroes of the American South it is called the 'conjure' finger. There is a superstition in Turkey to the effect that one must eat with three fingers only because 'the Devil ate with the other two'. Crossing the first



Michael Holford/British Museum

Fingers have been credited with spiritual powers in many societies: late Roman model, in bronze, of a hand in the attitude of benediction. Its effectiveness was thought to be increased by the pine cone on the thumb, the snake-like ring and the charms that embellish the palm and wrists

nd second fingers remains a popular rite for eeping the Devil at bay even today.

To point with the finger is not only rude ut psychically dangerous, and if the object ointed at happens to be a ship at sea it will uffer misfortune or even shipwreck. American Negroes refuse to point for fear that the nger used will rot off, while to point at a ruit tree causes the fruit to decay. The Latin riter Ovid mentions an ancient rite in which he spirits of the unburied dead are held way by pointing the joined finger and humb in their direction. To point at those elestial orbs, the sun, the moon and stars, rings misfortune upon the one who points.

In ancient times when mystical signs and ortents were the rule in the 'science' of rediction, the finger was sometimes egarded as the symbol of fate itself. Thus itzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*:

> The Moving Finger writes and having writ
> Moves on, nor all thy Piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line . . .

n rustic fatalism the fingers were believed o indicate by their individual shapes the ates of their owners. Thus in England long ingers were a sign of improvidence, but in Scotland were the characteristics of the otential thief; hence the slang phrase fingers' meaning pickpocket. A 17th century riter, Gaule, ridicules the whole dogma of inger lore which was then current; citing he superstitions that short fat fingers indicate intemperance and foolishness, long lean ingers wit, and that those whose fingers rook upwards are 'brutish, ravenous and nchaste'. There is a superstition that those orn with an extra finger are destined to be ucky in life, which is countered by the fate f Anne Boleyn who possessed six fingers n her left hand, a fact which was held to upport the view that she was a witch.

Signs in the Nails

The practice of decorating the fingers as been carried out for both medical and agical purposes in the past. The Arabs attooed their fingers as a protection against prains at the joints; while finger rings of abalistic design were worn for protection gainst the assaults of devils and witches. Some finger rings were said to endow the earer with magical powers, including the rt of achieving invisibility. Finger mutilation was performed in primitive rites for a ariety of reasons: religious, sacrificial, agical, as a luck-bringer, for the propitiation of the gods, and often as a symbol of ourning. Imprints of hands on cave walls ating back many thousands of years suggest that this is an extremely ancient practice. The Hottentots and Bushmen had the ustom of sacrificing the joints of the little inger of a newly-born child as a rite that, it as hoped, would prolong its life; while mong the West African Benga tribe the first oints of the fingers of dead ancestors were anded down as precious relics from generation to generation. It is on record that as any as 100 fingers were amputated as part f the mourning ceremonies of a Fijian chief.

The lore of finger-nails is, broadly speaking, analogous to that of the fingers, consisting of a treasury of signs and portents of the future, and as an indication of personal character which in the past was commonly regarded as authentic. Sceptics such as Gaule, however, referred contemptuously to the belief that there was any esoteric significance in variations in growth and shape or the specks on finger-nails. In pre-Christian times, and later, the art of divination by means of the finger-nails was known as onychomancy and this has survived in popular superstition to this day. If you see white spots on the thumbnail, this means that you will receive a gift; if on the index finger-nail, you have as many friends as there are spots; the number of spots on your middle finger indicates the number of your enemies; those on your ring finger-nail are a sign that a letter or a lover will soon arrive; and spots on the nail of your little finger mean that a journey is promised.

A vast system of ancient taboos continues to be associated with cutting the nails, with an infinity of variations. It is lucky to cut them on a Monday or Tuesday, and moderately so on Wednesday; nail-cutting on Thursday portends an illness or a pair of shoes and on Friday is ill-omened. If you do this on Saturday it invites either a loss or the visit of a lover, while cutting the nails on Sunday makes it a certainty that 'the Devil will have you all week'. It is still believed by many that a child's finger-nails must not be cut until it is one year old, except over a Bible; otherwise it will become a thief. They may be bitten off by the mother, however, with perfect safety. According to popular lore, the child who bites his finger-nails is a potential criminal.

In many communities it is considered essential to prevent finger-nail parings from falling into the hands of sorcerers who might use them for evil spells directed against their owner. A Northamptonshire rite by means of which one could acquire the powers of a witch was to sit on the hob cleaning the finger-nails and muttering 'I wish I was as far from God as my nails are from dirt'. In the days when witches were generally feared, it was widely believed that scratching the forehead of a witch with the finger-nails until the blood flowed would break her spell.

Decoration of the finger-nails as a device to ward off evil spirits was practised by the ancient Egyptians. It was one of the minor idolatries banned in Cromwell's England. Chinese mandarins gilded their finger-nails as a sign of rank, and men and women of mixed blood in Spain and America used to colour them to conceal their ancestry which would otherwise be betrayed by their nails.

In affairs of the heart, the lore of finger-nails played a bizarre part. Nail parings discreetly inserted into the loved one's wine provided an irresistible aphrodisiac; while the Indian lover was reputed to use his nails to inscribe symbols upon the body of his mistress during the rites of love.

(See also GESTURE; HAND OF GLORY and PALMISTRY.)

Finger movements are an integral part of classical Hindu dancing, which portrays the thoughts and emotions of gods and men: Ram Gopal, a leading exponent of the art

Peter Larsen

FINLAND

The Struggle of Light and Darkness

'For the people of the North, magic was the goal of all knowledge' and the epic poem of Finland, the Kalevala, is 'shot through and through with magic'

FOR MOST PEOPLE, the music of Sibelius is the only window into the world of Finno-Ugrian religion (Finno-Ugrian being a family of languages spoken from Lapland and the Baltic in the west to the Urals in the east). In Sibelius's tone-poems, such as 'Pohjola's Daughter', 'The Return of Lemminkainen' and above all 'The Swan of Tuonela', a romantic picture is evoked of dark forests, long nights and mystery. Knowing that the composer drew his inspiration from the Finnish national epic the *Kalevala,* we might suppose that if we knew this work we should have the key to the Finnish religious mind. In fact, the picture is much more complicated.

The peoples who speak the Finno-Ugrian languages belong today to Sweden (most of the Lapps), Finland, Hungary and Russia; they are widely scattered, and have been subject to many different religious influences. In some areas traditional beliefs survive only as half-remembered folklore; elsewhere, particularly farther east, they retain some relevance beneath a veneer of Islam, Christianity or ex-Communism. But they have for the most part been superseded.

Religion before Christianity

The earliest written sources date from the coming of Christianity. In 1551 Michael Agricola, the great reformer of the Finnish Church, included a list of the old gods in the preface to his translation of the Psalter. Needless to say, these sources have to be used with care, and backed up wherever possible by folklore and anthropology. The same applies to the *Kalevala,* which in its present form is a 19th-century compilation on the basis of popular traditional material.

The theme of the *Kalevala* is the struggle between life and death, light and darkness, represented by the kingdoms of Kalevala and Pohjola. Its heroes, Väinämöinen (a figure with some affinities with Orpheus) and Lemminkäinen, encounter death but emerge victorious. Their quest is a quest for power, and the *Kalevala* is shot through and through with magic. For the people of the North, magic was the goal of all knowledge, and both Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen, like the Scandinavian Odin himself, were great magicians.

In this respect the Kalevala is a microcosm of circumpolar religion, from Lapland to Labrador, and the object of all its religious practices was to secure man's place in a dangerous world by means of magical techniques. Of trusting dependence on the great supernatural powers there is little or nothing; of fear, wisdom and cunning a great deal. The typical figure is not the priest or prophet, but the shaman, with his power over the spirits and the capacity to project his own spirit through the air to the dwelling-place of the dead, as Väinämöinen does. In this, the Finno-Ugrians were at one with all the Northern hunters.

But for more than 3000 years most Finno-Ugrians have been agriculturalists and, like all agricultural peoples, their religious beliefs and practices must be seen in the context of the need for fertility – of man, animal and plant – and within the framework of heaven and earth, wood and stream, life and death.

At the head of the Finno-Ugrian pantheon stand the figures of the Sky Father and the Earth Mother, the primeval pair who are the joint sources and guarantors of fertility, to whom sacrifices are made in order that the fields may be fruitful. The Sky Father (either the sky personified or a personal living god in the sky) was called by various names: Jumala, Ilmarinen and Ukko ('grandfather') being the most common among the Baltic Finns. Jumala means 'sky', and Ilmarinen contains the word *ilma*, 'air, sky'. Similar words are found among the Cheremis of the Volga basin and the Votyaks in the Urals region. Jumala seems originally to have been a god of the sky; Ilmarinen a god of the atmosphere, wind, and weather (in the *Kalevala* he is a blacksmith, perhaps indicating an original connection with lightning); Ukko was a god of thunder, similar to the Scandinavian Thor, and, like him, was worshipped with spring sacrifices, libations, the consumption of intoxicants and sexual indulgence.

After the coming of Christianity all three came to be identified in various ways with God, Jesus and saints such as St George, St Nicholas, and many more.

The Earth Mother, as the consort of the Sky Father, was known as Maan-Emoinen or Rauni (a word derived from the Swedish name of the sacred tree, *rönn*, or mountain ash), in Estonia as Maa-ema and among the Votyaks as Muzjem-mumi.

Monarch of the Forest

The omnipresent forest was sacred to the Earth Mother, but was also thought of as possessing a life, will and power of its own; as such, it might well be personified as a spirit (*haltija*) or spirits in human form. By and large, the forest spirit (*metsän-haltija*) was benevolent if treated with respect. He or she would provide game for the hunters, and guide the lost traveller, and to this end small symbolical offerings were made, perhaps on a tree stump: Michael Agricola recorded the forest spirit's name as Tapio,

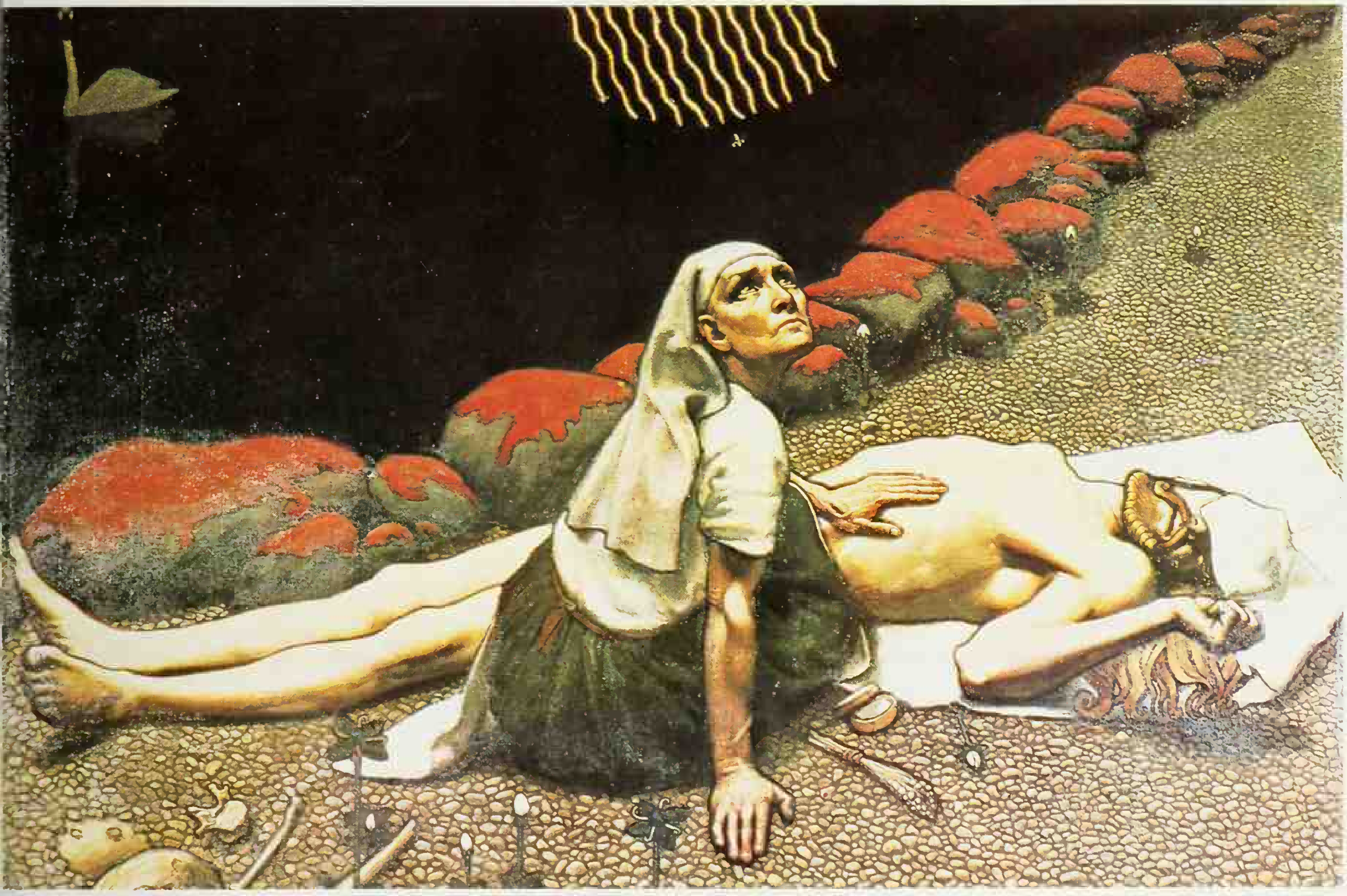
The Sacred Tree

Among the tribes of the Finnish-Ugrian stock in Europe, the heathen worship was performed for the most part in sacred groves, which were always enclosed with a fence. Such a grove often consisted merely of a glade or clearing with a few trees dotted about, upon which in former times the skins of the sacrificial victims were hung. The central point of the grove, at least among the tribes of the Volga, was the sacred tree, beside which everything else sank into insignificance. Before it the worshippers assembled and the priest offered his prayers, at its roots the victim was sacrificed, and its boughs sometimes served as a pulpit. No wood might be hewn and no branch broken in the grove, and women were generally forbidden to enter it.

But it is necessary to examine in some detail the notions on which the worship of trees and plants is based. To the savage the world in general is animate, and trees and plants are no exception to the rule. He thinks that they have souls like his own, and he treats them accordingly. 'They say,' writes the ancient vegetarian Porphyry, 'that primitive men led an unhappy life, for their superstition did not stop at animals but extended even to plants. For why should the slaughter of an ox or a sheep be a greater wrong than the felling of a fir or an oak, seeing that a soul is implanted in these trees also?'
J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*

and his kingdom as Tapiola; but the spirit might be female, or even a family of spirits.

Of the animals of the forest, the bear was the incomparable monarch. The first drops of blood from any game animal had to be poured on the ground in order to propitiate the spirits, but the skulls of bears were accorded special reverence and were mounted on a sacred tree, looking in the direction of the rising sun: a rite that was probably nearly as old as the forest itself. Both bear and wolf might be identified with the spirit of the forest, and animals generally were known as 'Tapio's flock'. Each species was also believed to have its 'owner', or guardian spirit, the bear mother, fox mother, and so on. It is interesting that in Christian times saints such as St Anne and St George have taken over from the haltija of the forest some of their functions as protectors of hunters. There were many lesser vegetation deities outside the forest, whose functions were also taken over by Christian saints.



Ateneum, Helsinki

Lemminkäinen, one of the main characters in the *Kalevala*, the great epic poem of Finland, was torn to pieces by the son of Tuoni, Lord of the Dead, when he attempted to kill the swan that swam on the dark river surrounding the underworld. He was magically restored to life by his mother: painting by A. Gallen-Kallela

The country east of Finland is a region not only of forests and fields, but also of lakes and rivers, and water spirits played an important role in popular belief. Just as the forest spirit owns the animals, so the water spirit, often pictured as a woman with long hair, is the owner of the fishes, and has to be propitiated when a good catch is desired.

In their houses, too, the Finno-Ugrians lived close to the world of the spirits. Each home had its own proper guardian spirit, who looked after the house and its inhabitants in return for small regular offerings of food and drink.

Life-Soul and Free-Soul

Finno-Ugrian beliefs and practices concerning the nature and destiny of man show remarkable similarities with those of Siberia and the northern parts of the North American continent. Common to all is the belief that man has more than one soul: he has a life-soul which is identified with the breath, and which animates the body, disappearing on death; and a free-soul, thought of as a man's 'double' or doppelgänger, which continues to enjoy independent existence after death, either in some land of the departed, or as a wandering and often mischievous ghost. It was believed that the dead themselves did not walk, and it was their haltijas, or spirits, that appeared as ghosts. In addition, there are vestiges of belief in the name-soul, in so far as a name was thought to carry with it qualities and attributes that could be passed on to a child.

In transactions involving the soul and the shaman, it is always the free-soul which is meant: sickness is believed to be caused by 'loss of soul', and a cure can only be effected if the lost soul can be caught and brought back by the shaman. Alternatively, cases of 'demon' possession would be treated by some form of exorcism. It was thought that death could occur when the soul of an afflicted person had passed entirely into the sphere of influence of some malevolent power. Death, therefore, was never due to 'natural causes'; it was always the result of supernatural influence.

The land of the dead, Tuonela or Manala as pictured in the *Kalevala*, is beneath the earth, approached by a long and difficult path, and surrounded by a dark river, on which a swan swims (the 'Swan of Tuonela', in Sibelius's tone-poem). The Lord of the Dead is Tuoni, and his consort is Tuonetar; their daughters are evil spirits, bringers of disease. The dead live more or less the kind of life that they have lived on earth, even marrying and having children, but there are traces in folklore of the belief that the land of the dead was a 'mirror-land' in which the sun rose in the west and set in the east, in which everything was upside-down, and in which the dead could gradually regain their youth.

Some Finno-Ugrians also believed in a celestial 'heaven', peopled by heroes killed in battle or struck by lightning. Otherwise there is little indication of any kind of moral distinction being drawn between people after death.

ERIC SHARPE

The *Kalevala* and Finnish Folklore

Finnish folklore is generally associated with the *Kalevala*, the great epic poem compiled by Elias Lönnrot (1802-84) from oral traditions he collected while practising medicine in North Karelia. The final version was published in 1849, and consisted of 50 cantos containing 22,795 verses.

Elias Lönnrot's motive in collecting oral literature stemmed from nationalist sentiment: he wanted to show that the Finns had a cultural heritage comparable to that of other peoples. The desire to create an artistic whole explains why he arranged his material in a sequence unknown to the unlettered singers of folksong, why he often united several characters into one and why he even made up passages. Nonetheless the *Kalevala* clearly reflects the main themes of Finnish folklore. Although the basic plot is heroic, Lönnrot wove into his work every type of Finnish oral tradition, ranging from legends, tales and epic poetry to lyric 'bird' poems, riddles and magic charms.

The action of the *Kalevala* centres on seven distinct episodes. It begins with the creation of the world from an egg and the birth of Väinämöinen, whose mother was the Virgin of the Air, but who was born in the water. Väinämöinen uses his magic powers to prepare the primeval wilderness as a home for the people of Kalevala. This is followed by Väinämöinen's wooing of Aino, who prefers death by drowning rather than marriage. Then comes a description of the relations between the people of Kalevala and their northern neighbours in Pohjola, identified by scholars as Lapland. Väinämöinen, Lemminkäinen the wild adventurer, and the hero-smith Ilmarinen in turn undertake the hazardous journey to woo the daughter of Louhi, the Mistress of Pohjola. It is Ilmarinen who finally wins her, but only after accomplishing various tasks including the forging of the *sampo*, a magic mill providing unlimited amounts of grain, salt and money.

Five cantos known as the *Kullervo*-cycle follow. Kullervo is a hapless youth separated from his family by a feud between his father, Kalervo, and his uncle, Untamo. While he is still a boy his uncle makes several unsuccessful attempts to murder him. Kullervo is finally sold as a slave to Ilmarinen, whose wife torments him beyond endurance; he takes his revenge by causing her to be torn to pieces by a pack of bears and wolves. Kullervo flees and by chance is reunited with his family. Fate still pursues him, however, and returning home one day he meets and seduces a girl only to discover that she is his long-lost sister. The girl commits suicide and in despair Kullervo sets out to slay his uncle Untamo. The cycle concludes with Kullervo taking his own life.

The death of Ilmarinen's wife provides the link back to the main narrative. Ilmarinen decides to return to Pohjola and woo his sister-in-law. Unsuccessful in winning her affection and angered by the ease of life that the sampo has provided for the inhabitants of Pohjola, he persuades Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen to accompany him on an expedition to seize it. There follows a series of struggles during which the sampo is smashed and most of it lost in the sea; Louhi the Protectress of Pohjola sends diseases to Kalevala, and hides the sun and moon, but is finally forced to leave the people of Kalevala in peace.

Finally, Marjatta, a virgin, conceives by swallowing a whortleberry, and gives birth to a son. Väinämöinen wants to have the baby killed; but when the two-week-old boy reproaches him, he is forced to acknowledge a greater power. The boy is christened king of Karelia and Väinämöinen departs to a place between heaven and earth to await a day when his people will need him again.

Folk Tales and Legends

Finnish folklore, typified by the *Kalevala*, embraces elements from many ages and sources. For the purposes of a general analysis there are four major strata. The oldest stratum of Finnish folklore is represented by the pervading atmosphere of magic which owes much to the shamanistic cults of northern Eurasia. The same stratum also includes legends concerning

The shaman, with his power over the spirit world and his ability to project his own spirit to the land of the dead, is the priest of Finno-Ugrian religion *Above* Shaman uttering incantations to the sound of a magic drum, his back decorated with feathers that will help him fly to the spirits, and with bells to announce his arrival *Right* Shaman in his tent: the magic drum is behind him

the creation of the universe, struggles between men and animals, and the worship of animals. Scholars differ on the date, but it probably goes back to several centuries BC, before the ancestors of the Finns had emerged from Russia, when they were still in contact with other Finno-Ugrian peoples.

The second stratum dates from just before the birth of Christ, when the ancient Finns began to reach the east Baltic area and came into close contact with the ancient Balts and Germans. This period saw the distinctive *Kalevala*-type metre, and the 'origin' poems or spells. This is a form of magic which is rarely found beyond the Finnic area. By describing the origin of an object, displaying one's knowledge of its nature, the object could be created, in the case of fire or iron; overcome, in the case of the bear or other enemies; or warded off, in the case of illness. It is interesting that the actions of these spells were brought about by the power of knowledge, without appeal to a supernatural force. Probably the poems about Väinämöinen, Joukahainen, who also features in the *Kalevala*, and Ilmarinen began to evolve during this era.

The third stratum dates from the early Middle Ages when contacts with Scandinavian peoples grew more frequent. Evidence of these contacts is found in the borrowing of the Scandinavian ballad form and thematic concepts. The sampo-episode is reminiscent of a Viking raid and comparison with the Icelandic sagas shows that there can be no doubt of its Scandinavian origin.

The fourth stratum coincides with the introduction of Christianity in the 12th century, and the spread of medieval tales and legends, which often underwent considerable local modification both before and after reaching Finland. Among the themes dating from this period are the *Kullervo*-cycle, related by some scholars to the medieval Amleth or Hamlet tale; and Väinämöinen's playing of the zither-like *kantele*, which recalls the medieval versions of the Orpheus legend. The impact of Christianity on Finland's pagan culture is pleasingly symbolized by the episode in which Väinämöinen relinquishes his power to the child born of the virgin Marjatta. The same period is also characterized by a marked increase in folk literature forms with especial proliferation of spells, ballads, proverbs and riddles.

Magical Spells

For centuries Finns have been reputed to possess demonic powers, but the practice of devil-worship within Finland itself does not seem to have been widespread. It is clear that the ecclesiastical authorities never had cause to fear witchcraft as it was feared in the rest of Europe, for in the whole of Finland's history less than sixty people were sentenced to death for this crime. The practice of magic, however, was a central feature of Finnish life (and still is, in a few remote areas); it is also an essential feature of Finnish folklore and the *Kalevala* contains some 4,200 verses of spell poetry. Magic was used to ensure success, and sometimes protection, in hunting, fishing, farming and raising livestock; and spells were used to cure or ward off illness, to protect against evil and to foretell the future. In fact there was a magic formula to accompany almost every aspect of life.

There were various ways in which magic could be worked: the supplicant could make offerings to spirits of the forest, field and so on; he himself could recite spells; or he could have them recited by a recognized worker of magic, who generally performed the spell alone or in the presence only of the supplicant. He rarely performed before groups of people for fear of weakening the magic. The spell was often in verse, and the wizard would move his body to the rhythm of the chant. Sometimes this induced a state of trance which may be seen as a survival of ancient shamanistic practice. This state was much sought after, for it was believed to give greater effect to the spell.

Finnish magic has much in common with that practised throughout Europe and Asia, where much of it originated. The influence of the ancient spells of India and Egypt reached the Finns through the ancient Germans and easily took root in minds that regarded shamanistic magic as the driving force of life. The majority of surviving Finnish spells, however, spring from the Christian beliefs and legends that spread to Finland during the late Middle Ages.

M.A. BRANCH

FURTHER READING: J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (St. Martin's Press, 1980); F.P. Magoun, Jr, *Kalevala* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1963).

Warrior-magician and poet, conqueror of giants and monsters, Finn is the central figure in a cycle of Irish heroic tales; his exploits are commemorated even today in the songs and legends of Gaelic-speaking Ireland and Scotland

FINN

THE TWO MOST RENOWNED HEROES of early Irish tradition are Finn and Cu Chulainn. The latter is alleged to have lived about the turn of the Christian era, while Finn was reputed to have died in the second half of the 3rd century AD, aged 230 years – a sure indication of his superhuman nature. Each of these two warriors has attracted the interest of the Irish story-tellers, and each in his own way has stimulated their imagination and inspired their talent.

Similar though they were in many ways and, in the earliest tales, both operating in a heroic milieu, there are marked differences between their individual characters and their roles in their own society. Cu Chulainn never gained the hold on popular tradition that Finn and his followers obtained; and it seems that in the case of Finn there was a strong oral tradition concerning him among the common people at the time of the earliest manuscript records. Cu Chulainn was the central figure in the so-called *Ulster Cycle* of tales (see CU CHULAINN), while Finn was the main character in the *Fenian Cycle*, the second group of heroic tales, which was named after the *fiana*, 'bands of warriors', whose deeds it commemorates. The leading personalities in this cycle of stories are Finn mac Cumaill, his son Ossian (Oisin), Diarmait mac Duinn and Goll mac Morna. Finn was of the Clann Baoiscne, which formed one faction of the company; Goll was of the Clann Morna and had been responsible for killing Finn's father Cumall.

According to tradition, Finn and Cu Chulainn are both warriors and both possess magical powers; both have direct and profound dealings with the gods and goddesses of the pagan otherworld. They differ in so far as they each portray different aspects of early Celtic society. Cu Chulainn figures as the hero within the tribal system, the protector of his people, the nephew of the king himself. Finn, on the other hand, stands for the hero outside the tribe, living off the land, fighting, hunting, plundering, living a life that was in essence nomadic. He was not subject to the tribal laws; he had renounced his kin, and his kin had given up all claim to him. They would not avenge his wrongs, nor would he protect them in their distress. He was *ecland*, 'clanless'. But Finn and the fiana, his bands of followers, although landless, did have the right to obtain justice.

The fiana had a recognized and respected place of their own in society; they could only become members of a fian or war-band by being chosen, and acceptance depended upon their proving themselves through a series of rigorous initiation ordeals. The following examples will give some idea of the nature of these rites: a hole, deep enough for a man to be buried in up to his waist was dug, and the candidate entered it armed with his shield and a hazel stick of prescribed length. Nine warriors then launched their javelins at him, and if any one of these touched him he was rejected. He had to braid his hair and run off through the woods with the Fenians after him; if caught he could not be accepted; if a branch cracked under his feet, or a twig caught his hair, or if his weapons trembled in his hands, he failed the test and was refused admittance to a fian. Various other ordeals that must be undergone by those who wished to break with tribal society and join one of these war bands are described in the Irish tales.

The Magic Hood

A *feinid*, a member of a fian, must have been educated to an advanced standard (the Celtic peoples have always held learning in high esteem) and he must be familiar with the twelve traditional forms of poetry. In the summer months the Fenians lived a life of wandering, seeking for game and for military glory. In winter they lived off the country – but they cannot in any sense be considered a mercenary army such as the *Gaesatae* of Gaul. They had one extraordinary privilege which gave rise to much ill-feeling within the tribes: the right to have first choice of any women of the tribe. Indeed, no girl could be married ntil she had first been offered to the enians. Unlike Cu Chulainn, who had only ne wife, Finn was polygamous.

Finn was the son of Cumall. The form *umall* is in fact an error which crept into he later Finn tales, and gave rise to the dentification with the god Camulos, invoked t Colchester (Camulodunum) and elsewhere. Finn's father most probably was ivine, but he could have had no connection ith Camulos. The oldest recorded form f his name is in fact *Umall*; the form *macc maill*, 'Son of Umall', gave rise to the ater *mac Cumaill*, the second 'c' of *macc* eing transferred to the father's name. ut Umall himself was in all likelihood of ivine origin. It has been argued that Finn ad as his father a Celtic ancestor-deity known as Nuadu, who, in accordance with universal Celtic custom, may have had other names, among them Umall. The Celtic deities were often known by several different names and descriptive epithets.

The supposition that Finn had a divine father is somewhat strengthened by the fact that Cu Chulainn had as father the great god Lugh himself; just as Umall and Nuadu may well have been the same person originally, so (it has been argued) may Finn and Lugh once have been identical. Be that as it may, there are certainly strong reasons for believing Finn to have been a pagan Irish deity who was given a historical basis by the story-tellers and turned into a warrior-magician with singular powers. According to one tradition, in fact, he was reborn in the form of King Mongan, a historical personage who lived in the late 6th or early 7th century AD, although 'Mongan would not let it be known' that he was a rebirth of Finn. In this form Finn could allegedly assume any animal shape. Again, another indication of his original divinity is the fact that there are hints in the early Irish genealogies of a triad (group of three) of Finns, much in

Finn may have been a pagan Irish deity who was later given a historical basis; there are hints in early genealogies of a group of three Finns, in keeping with the Celtic predilection for gods in triple form, and the meaning of the Gaelic name for Tara, early Ireland's main royal centre, is 'Tara of the three Fionns': interior of one of the mounds on the hill of Tara

C M Dixon

keeping with the Celtic predilection for the number three, and their liking for deities in triple form. The Gaelic name for Tara, County Meath, the main royal centre of early Ireland, means 'Tara of the three Fionns'; and there are also references to the 'Three Finns of Emania'. The god Lugh likewise appears in triadic form.

A triad of deities are Finn's enemies in an 8th century story: these were the Fothads, known as *Aendia*, 'Single God', *Trendia*, 'Strong God' and *Caendia*, 'Fair God'. Another divine opponent of Finn in another story of the same period, 'Finn and the Man in the Tree', is Derce Corra mac hui Daighre. A passage in this extraordinary tale, quoted in my *Pagan Celtic Britain*, gives a most convincing impression of genuine mythology, comparable to that suggested by certain reliefs from Roman Gaul:

> One day as Finn was in the wood seeking him he saw a man in the top of a tree, a black bird on his right shoulder and in his left hand a white vessel of bronze, filled with water in which was a skittish trout and a stag at the foot of the tree. And this was the practice of the man, cracking nuts; and he would give half the kernel of the nut to the black bird that was on his right shoulder while he himself would eat the other half; and he would take an apple out of the bronze vessel that was in his left hand, divide it in two, throw one half to the stag that was at the foot of the tree, and then eat the other half himself. And on it he would drink a sip of the bronze vessel that was in his hand, so that he and the trout and the stag and the black bird drank together. And then his followers asked Finn who he in the tree was, for they did not recognize him on account of the hood of disguise which he wore.

Finn himself had a magic hood which enabled him to be a different animal according to the way he wore it. A further hint of Finn's divinity may perhaps come from the fact that his equivalent in Welsh tradition is the shadowy figure, Gwyn ap Nudd. Like Finn, Gwyn is a hunter-warrior-magician; there is very little about him in early Welsh literature, but he is of the first importance in one of the *Four Branches* of the *Mabinogion*, namely the *mabinogi* of *Culhwch and Olwen* (see MABINOGION). Here he is associated with the hunting of the great mythical boar Twrch Trwyth, a transformed prince, who appears in Irish tradition as Orc Treith.

Prophetic Powers

It seems that a deity having a name similar to that of Finn, or containing the same element, was worshipped in Gaul (*Vind*, from *vindos*, 'white'). Such names as that of the god Vindonnus as well as evidence from certain place-names containing this element suggest that, like Lugh, Finn – or a closely related deity – was known in Gaul, and therefore was popular throughout the Celtic world. Like many other Irish and Welsh heroes, the divine Finn was replaced by the hero Finn under the influence of Christianity. Other indications of Finn's non-human nature are not difficult to find.

Finn possessed the gift of magic prophetic powers. The way in which these powers were allegedly bestowed upon him differs according to the various traditions; but it is interesting that the entire lore about Finn, ancient and modern, is in agreement in making him consistently a warrior-hero-magician who, when he chews his thumb, becomes possessed of second sight. One of the best-known versions of the story which tells how he obtained this magic gift is, in outline, as follows: Goll mac Morna killed Umall (Cumall), Finn's father, in a fight. His mother was pregnant at the time, and shortly afterwards gave birth to a son, Finn. His original name was Demne (just as Cu Chulainn was known as Setanta before he earned his real name) and he later became Finn. When he grew up he went to a certain poet in order to learn the poetic arts. This poet, Finn Eces, had been waiting for seven years to catch the legendary salmon of Linn Feic, which would bestow knowledge of all things upon him who ate it. When he had caught it he asked Finn to cook it for him, but said he must on no account eat any of it. Finn, however, burnt his thumb, and when he put it in his mouth he realized he had become possessed of the knowledge of all things, including, according to some later versions of the tale, the realization that his tutor was his enemy. He proceeded to kill him. Thereafter, Finn evoked his magical knowledge by chewing his thumb.

Tooth of Wisdom

This ritual is reminiscent of the rite performed by the pagan priests of Ireland, known as *imbas forosnai*: to evoke knowledge the priest chewed a piece of raw flesh from a cat, dog or red pig, which had been sacrificed in honour of the deity in question. Finn chewed his own thumb in order to obtain the same result. In the words of one folktale version of the episode (in T. F. O'Rahilly's *Early Irish History and Mythology*) Finn chewed his thumb from the skin to the flesh, from the flesh to the bone, from the bone to the marrow, from the marrow to the juice – and then he knew. Finn was also alleged to have possessed a special 'tooth of wisdom' and he is described as putting 'his thumb under his tooth of wisdom'.

Finn and his followers also manifest a semi-animal nature. Finn was the father of Ossian or Oisin, 'little deer', from whom the *Ossianic Cycle* was named. The Fenians lived very much on the outskirts of society, close to Nature, and were deeply involved with the supernatural world. One of Finn's wives, the mother of Ossian, was a doe called Saar. When her offspring was about to be born she was told that if she could refrain from licking it, it would be human; but that otherwise it would be a deer. When the creature was born she managed to deny her instinct to lick it, as she had been bidden, except that she could not refrain from touching its brow with her tongue. As a result Ossian had a tuft of fur on his forehead. Finn's two faithful dogs, Bran and Sgeolan, his companions on every venture, were his own nephews, sons of his sister Tuirenn; she had been turned into a bitch by a jealous rival. Finn himself could become a man, dog, or deer according to which way he wore his magic hood.

The evidence therefore all points strongly towards Finn's divine origin with counterparts in Wales and Gaul, and probably throughout the Celtic world, just as had Lugh (Lugus, Lleu) himself. But although he is likely to have originated as a god, he had no divine connotation for the later storytellers and the tradition-bearers of the surviving Celtic world. The growth of the legend of Finn as national hero of Ireland took place during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries, when he was associated with the supernatural, with fighting and hunting, and with amorous adventures of all kinds. By the time of the famous narrative work, *Acallam na Senorach*, 'The Colloquy of the Old Men' in about 1200 AD, Finn had been fitted into a close historical context, and is represented as being in charge of troops at about the end of the 3rd century AD. He is still portrayed as a warrior and a hunter, possessed of outstanding poetic gifts and supernatural wisdom, but much Christianization has now taken place.

In length the *Acallam na Senorach* is second only to the epic *Tain Bo Cualnge* (the main story in the *Ulster Cycle*, of which Cu Chulainn is the central character). It is basically concerned with St Patrick's meeting with the survivors of the Fenians, namely Ossian, son of Finn, Cailte, and one or two others. They are wandering about in Ireland, lamenting the old days and their beloved companions in the chase and the fight. Ossian eventually joins his mother in a *sidh* (otherworld dwelling), and Cailte goes on by himself and meets Patrick. They travel throughout Ireland together, and Cailte tells Patrick all the heroic deeds performed by Finn and his followers in the past. He describes their encounters with the supernatural and with the pagan gods and goddesses, and Patrick questions him closely and listens with sympathy and enjoyment. Cailte explains why particular places have certain names, and tells the story of how these came to be bestowed. As a reward for the pleasure given to Patrick and to the kings who sometimes formed part of the audience, Patrick promises forgiveness and release from hell for Finn and other noteworthy members of the company.

Vital Tradition

The most famous prose tale of the *Fenian Cycle* is the 'Pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne', a version of which goes back to the 10th century. Finn is married to Grainne, a daughter of Cormac the king. She prefers his son Ossian, but he refuses her for the sake of his father. She then falls in love with Diarmaid, and forces him to elope with her. The story is concerned with their adventures in escaping from the vengeance of Finn and his men, and Finn's ultimate revenge when Diarmaid is slain some years later hunting the great supernatural boar of Ben Gulban. Finn has many adventures with the inhabitants of the pagan otherworld, and a number of the modern folktales and ballads are concerned with these. Unlike the *Ulster Cycle*, and the stories of the great hero Cu Chulainn, the *Fenian Cycle* took a great hold on the popular imagination. In modern Irish and Scottish

Gaelic folktales elements have remained which in many instances seem to form a more direct link with the Finn of the earliest Irish written traditions than with later literary compositions.

As the collector of Scottish-Gaelic folk-ales, J. F. Campbell, wrote in *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, published in 1862: 'Short passages, stanzas and lines of poetry, ascribed to Ossian, are even still recited through a great many parts of the Highlands, and tales about the Feinn, nterspersed with verse, are yet to be heard n many districts from old men. There are very few Highlanders that cannot even now say something about Fionn and his heroes; how they fought and died . . . Rocks, hills and streams are called after the Feinne. Surnames are derived from them . . . and generally the Feinne and their exploits pervade all Celtic Scotland and all Gaelic tradition.' This is an impressive testimony to the longevity and vitality of a tradition which began in the distant Celtic past and persisted with no decrease in popularity down to the present day. For it is still possible, in the remaining Gaelic-speaking areas of Ireland and Scotland, to hear tales and to listen to songs commemorating Finn mac Cumaill, his son Ossian, and all the other colourful members of the fiana, tales and songs in which Finn is still the warrior, the poet possessed of supernatural knowledge, the conqueror of giants and monsters, the mighty hunter; preserving in his legend ideals and beliefs that belong to a remote, barbaric past, a pagan rather than a Christian world.

ANNE ROSS

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Ossian, after whom the *Ossianic Cycle* of tales was named, was the son of Finn and of a doe called Saar; the only sign of his animal parentage was a tuft of fur on his forehead, where his mother had touched him with her tongue: Ossian's Grave in County Antrim, Northern Ireland

C. M. Dixon

Usually a symbol of fertility and constancy, the fir or pine was also associated with ancient funeral customs; in northern Europe and Russia t was the tree of the shaman or medicine-man

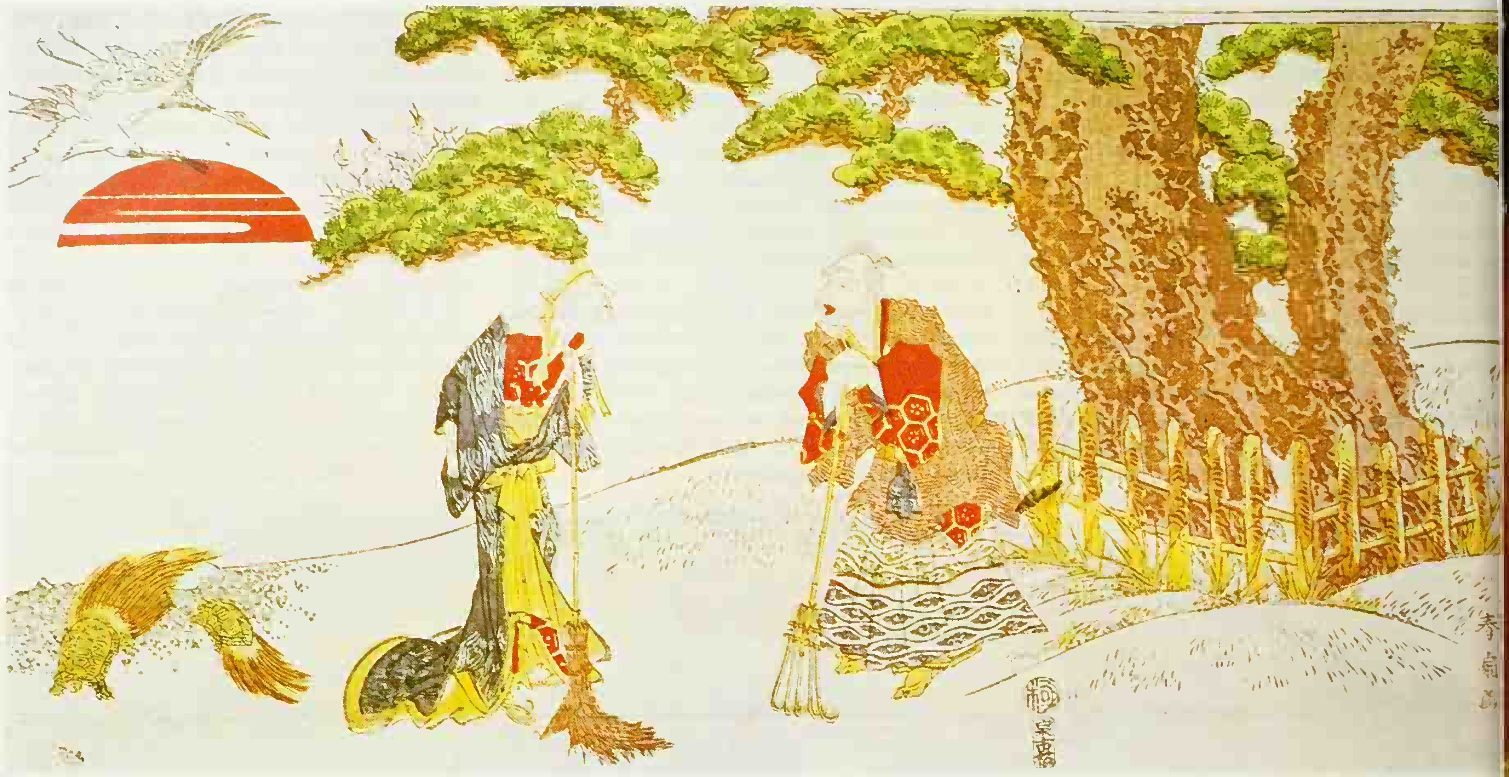
FIR

IN MYTHOLOGY references to the fir include not only the true firs but any kind of cone-bearing tree or conifer, and many of these are undoubtedly kinds of pine. The word fir' is used in the same way in the Bible. As one of the first timbers to be used for boat-building, the pine was sacred to the sea god in classical times.

In Phrygia the pine was sacred to Cybele, 'Mother of the Gods' and the goddess of fertility. Legend tells of her love for Attis, a young shepherd, whom she charged with looking after her temple, making him vow to remain celibate. In one version he fell in love with a nymph and, mad with remorse for neglecting his vow, castrated himself and bled to death beneath a pine. In a Roman version the goddess – now Rhea – prevented his death by turning him into a pine and was only consoled when Jupiter assured her the tree would remain evergreen.

The spring festival of Cybele involved cutting down a pine and carrying it, shrouded corpse-like and decorated with the violets believed to have sprung from Attis's blood, into the sanctuary. The third day was known as the Day of Blood when the eunuch priests wounded themselves, and some of those attending the ceremony became possessed and castrated themselves. Attis is therefore one of the tree spirits, but like Adonis, his history also represents the 'killing' of the corn by the reaper, its burial in the granary, and its rebirth on being sown. He has a further parallel in the Egyptian Osiris whose image, in his tree spirit manifestation, was buried in a hollowed-out pine log which was burned a year later. This ritual is illustrated in Osiris's hall at Denderah in Egypt, and was recorded by Firmicus Maternus in the 4th century AD.

The pine appears again as a rebirth



Because of its longevity, and because it is evergreen, the Japanese regard the pine as a symbol of constancy and long life; this concept is reflected in the aged couple, Jo and Uba, the spirits of the pine tree, who are depicted in this Japanese print: Victoria and Albert Museum

symbol in the Greek *Thesmophoria*, a ritual in which food and pine branches were cast into caves or vaults sacred to Demeter, and were brought forth a year later and placed on the altar. Those present seized the decaying morsels and sowed them together with the seed corn to ensure a fruitful crop. The immortality symbolism of the evergreen pine rendered it useful at funerals to signify man's belief in the immortality of the soul, a custom that was recorded in classical times and, more recently, in Norway and Russia, where pine or fir boughs were placed on coffins before they were interred. In Norway fir boughs were fixed to a house where a death had occurred to keep away evil spirits.

Pine Cones for Virginity

Immortality and perpetuation go together, and pine and fir were also used as fertility symbols. Virgil described the pine as *pronuba*, because of the pinewood torches used at weddings. In a Shrove-tide custom recorded in Hanover, the men begged gifts from the women, beating them with fir branches at the same time, which was supposed to encourage their child-bearing. Fir trees were placed before houses in central Germany when a wedding was taking place, and in northern Germany newly married couples went through a ceremony in which they held fir branches carrying candles. In the same area, when the cattle were driven to their first spring pastures, the drovers often fixed fir branches on the last cow, hoping to ensure productivity for the herd.

The Japanese regard the pine, an evergreen tree, as a symbol of constancy, and of married faithfulness. Because of the longevity of dwarfed or *bonsai* trees, the pine also represents long life in Japan. The Chinese likewise made the pine one of their emblems of constancy, because it was evergreen and withstood the adversity of winter without any alteration.

The Romans believed that unopened pine cones represented virginity, and virgins would wear pine garlands at ceremonies, as described by the poet Callimachus in his hymn to Diana, in the 3rd century BC.

The pine was also connected with Dionysus, whose followers would sometimes wear pine foliage; a cone tipped the god's thyrsos, a ceremonial staff twined with ivy or vine leaves.

It seems probable that the fir, often the only tree apart from the birch in northern Europe and Russia, was the tree of the shaman or medicine-man in those countries. At any rate, fir saplings, either nine or in multiples of nine, were set before or around the shaman's house; he had to climb the first sapling, leap from one tree to the next, and come down the ninth, to prove that man belonged to both earth and sky. The shaman became possessed and prophesied in front of fir saplings; and when he died his body or his coffin would be hoisted up into a fir.

The mysteriously hardening resin of conifers was believed to have magical properties and was used in incense when the Eastern materials were not available. Resin was also an ingredient of primitive fireworks, and as such connects the fir and pine with the Green Man. Basically, like Attis, a tree spirit or king of the woods, this figure is thought to have originated in a cult of priest-magicians who were custodians of fire and developed the art of making fireworks in order to impress their devotees. In the early 17th century the Green Man and his savage ally the Wodehouse, who dressed only in breeches and headpiece of leaves, were popular characters in plays and pageants. His symbol was a staff tipped with a pine cone.

As the Christmas tree, the fir plays an important part in modern Christmas celebrations, although the reasons why a fir is used are speculative. In an ancient German ritual girls danced round a fir, and having imprisoned the imp of the tree in this way made him give them whatever they wished for. This pagan imp was later associated with the Christian St Nicholas, or Santa Claus. Since the tree was apparently decorated with eggs, among other objects, it seems likely that this was originally a fertility ritual, yet another example of the use of the evergreen conifer as a symbol of productivity.

These peasant rites, probably celebrated in many parts of Scandinavia, Europe and Russia, gradually spread. The popularity of the Christmas tree in Britain dates from its appearance at a famous children's party held by Prince Albert at Windsor in 1841: abetted by Charles Dickens, the royal family soon made the Christmas tree as universally popular in this country as it was in Germany (see CHRISTMAS).

The Jews used evergreens in holy rituals: 'The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary' (Isiah 60.13).

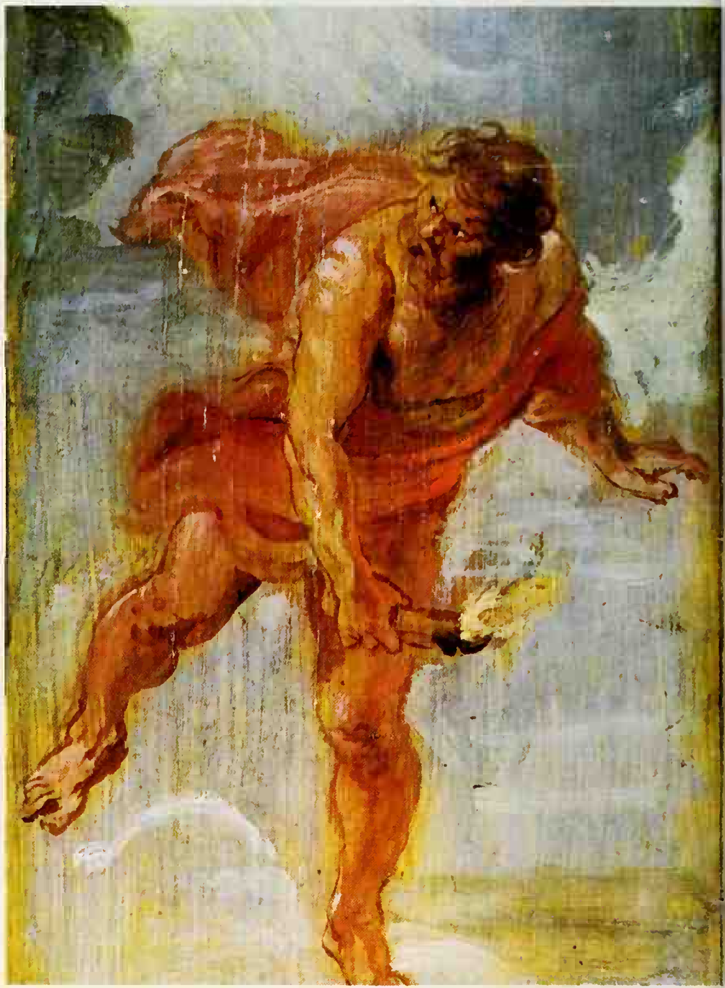
Although to dream of a fir means suffering, it was thought possible to prevent nightmares by laying a branch at the foot of one's bed. A branch that had been partly burned was believed to be protection against lightning, and a bough on the barn door prevented the theft of grain by witches or human thieves. In the language of flowers, fir represents time, and pine is 'hope in adversity'.

(See also CYBELE.)

A. J. HUXLEY

FIRE

Constantine Reyes-Valerio



Previous page A replica of a Viking long ship is burnt each January as the hig point of the Festival of Uphellya, a Lerwick in the Shetland Islands *Above le* Image of Xiuhtecuhtli, dating from th 7th to 9th century AD. Xiuhtecuhtli wa the fire god of the Toltecs, an ancient peopl of southern Mexico: most civilization have included in their pantheon a god o fire *Above right* The Titan Prometheus, i the best known version of a myth commo to many peoples, stole a brand of fire fro the gods to give to man: a painting b Rubens in the Prado, Madrid *Far right* Watche by Elisha, the prophet Elijah is carrie up to heaven in a chariot of fire. In the Bibl fire is often an attribute of the divine: paintin by Giovanni Piazzetta

The everlasting flames of hell have been used to terrify sinners for generations. But fires are also associated with festivals, as any child who celebrates Guy Fawkes' Day knows

ENEMY AND FRIEND of mankind, the element of fire occupies a dual role. Fire can be the blazing forest, the volcano belching forth sulphurous death, or the dreadful heat of the desert sun. In war it is the crimson terror engulfing cities and nations, but in peace it is the glowing industrial furnace, servant of man, and the friendly hearth, symbol of domesticity and peace. Yet fire remains an elementary force imprisoned within a man-made cage, ready at the least relaxation of vigilance to escape from its prison and reduce homes and cities to ashes.

Fire to the ancients represented the seed of life, to which all life must in time return. As one of the four elements in which the basic matter of creation found physical expression, it symbolized the ray of light, the lightning and gold and, in its material aspects, heat and dryness.

Fire is also the agent of purification and renewal, and therefore of sacrifice and resurrection. It has been used throughout history in the rites of sacrifice, for the burned offering was considered peculiarly appropriate as an atonement for sin. Sometimes the god himself might be ritually consumed in the fires in the person of a human substitute or in effigy, a rite devised for the purpose of liberating the spiritual element from the corruptible mortal bonds. This was the fate of the Cappadocian god Sandan, corresponding to Hercules, burned in effigy at Tarsus.

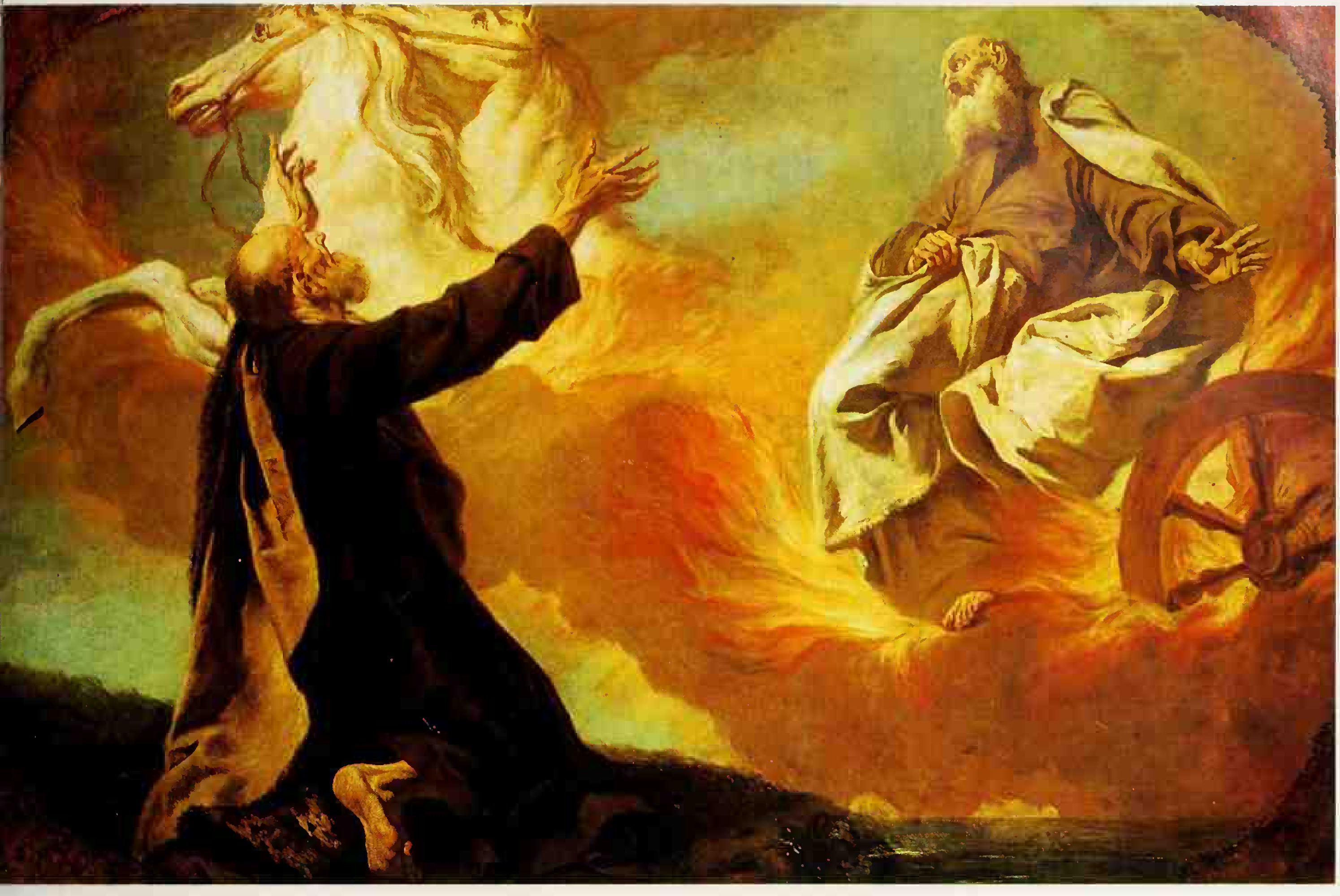
The idea that fire embodies a form of divinity is a basic theme of the world's religions. In the book of Exodus in the Old Testament we read of the miracle of the burning bush, which Moses saw as he tended his flocks: 'And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.' Fire, as a sacred element, was tended with infinite care, often as a religious rite. The divine fires of Vesta, Roman goddess of the hearth, were served by priestesses who were bound to chastity under pain of death. In Ireland a perpetual fire was maintained at Kildare and tended by nuns until the beginning of the 16th century, this being no doubt a relic of pagan fire worship carried forward into the Christian era. Similarly, in ancient Peru sacred fires were maintained by the virgin daughters of the Inca.

Masters of Fire

Every civilization, great and small, has incorporated in its pantheon of deities a god of fire, Apollo, Helios, Hestia, Loki and Lleu (Lugh) being those with whom we in the West are most familiar. There were gods of sun fire, lightning fire, forest fire, prairie fire, altar fire and hearth fire. Every society projected its own conception of fire on to its created gods. To the Mongols the fire deity was Mother Ut, whose father was steel and whose mother was flint. For many North American Indians fire was the sun's representative on earth; tribes of the Grea Lakes worshipped 'Grandfather Fire' in special cult.

The extensive fire mythology of the fir worshippers of ancient India centred upo the fire god Agni, symbol of earth-kindle fire, lightning and the fire of the sun; h was reincarnated daily from the fingers o holy maidens who twirled the fire drill. Th Parsees, the modern representatives o Zoroastrianism, are so dedicated to the sanctity of fire that they will not burn their dead exposing them instead on Towers of Silence

A consistent theme of mythology has bee the belief that the first fire was stolen eithe from the gods or the sun and handed on t mankind. Prometheus, in Greek legend th giver of the sacred flame to mankind, wa



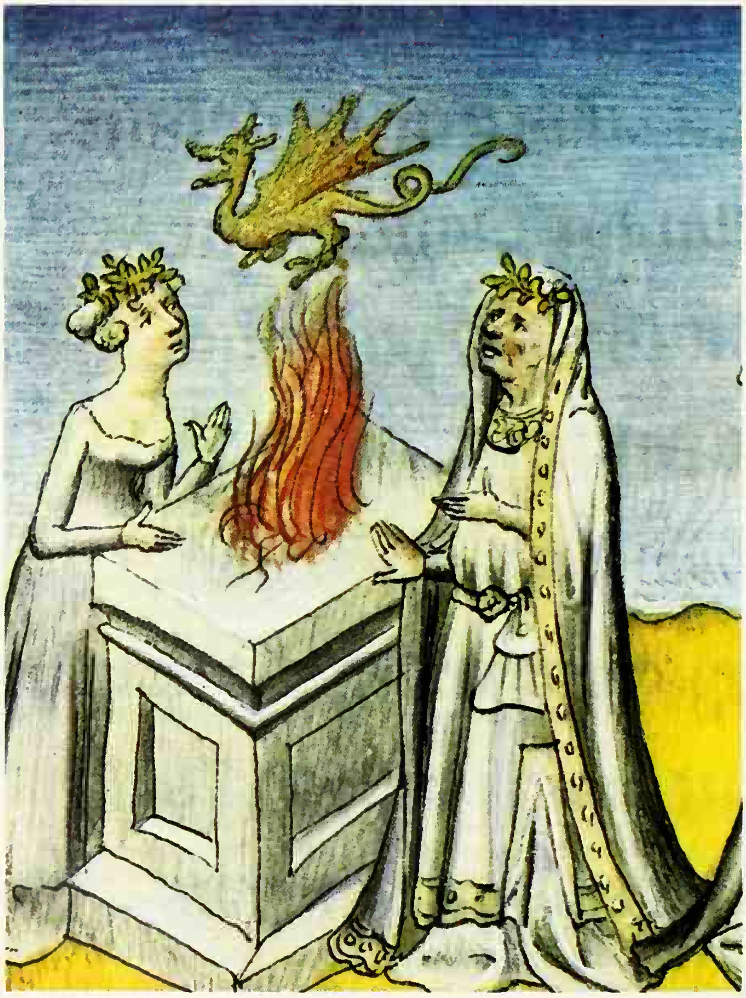
National Gallery of Art Washington

The Indian fire god Agni was reincarnated daily from the fingers of holy maidens who twirled the fire drill

unished for the theft by the angry Zeus. he Finns held fire to be the child of the in, descended from the heavens where it as rocked in a tub of yellow copper. In uropean folklore the agent of fire was com- only a bird. The theft theme is widespread mong North American Indians, whose tales peak of fire stolen by a trickster lture hero, then passed from animal to nimal in a relay, while the angry owners ursue it until finally it is given to umanity. Some tribes, including Indians f Brazil, believe the stolen flame to ave been hidden among the trees, no doubt ecause fire could be found ready-made in e smouldering of a lightning-charred ree. Then too, fire was first produced y rubbing one piece of wood against another. For this reason the oak, a hard wood suitable for fire-making, was considered sacred; the mistletoe, which grows on the oak, became in consequence a protective charm against lightning, while an acorn carried in the pocket gave security to the traveller.

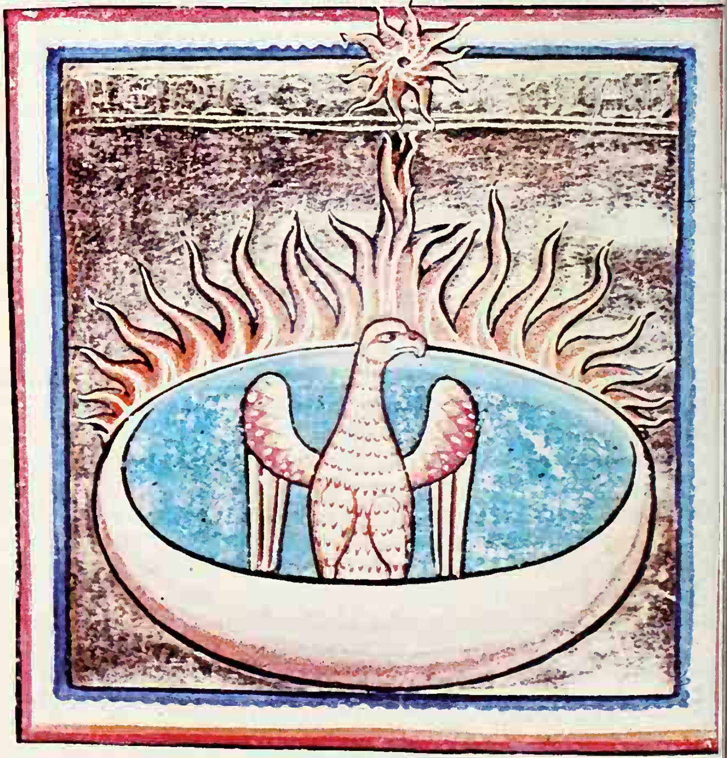
The priesthood of the oak, the Druids (see DRUIDS) were also Masters of Fire, as were lesser mortals who had acquired the supposedly miraculous art of igniting fire and who were considered in consequence to be inspired by the gods. Potters and smiths, who worked with fire, were craftsmen falling into this category, and for thousands of years the latter were credited with magical powers of a high order. This is confirmed by a Yakut proverb which declares that 'the first smith, the first shaman and the first potter were blood brothers'. Smiths, by virtue of their supposed knowledge of the secrets of fire and iron, were assumed to exercise a degree of power over the elements which extended to healing the sick. Although universally respected, they seem to have excited considerable apprehension among the early Christian clergy, and in an ancient hymn Christendom is warned to guard itself against 'the spells of women, smiths and Druids'. In a number of intriguing medieval legends smiths were regarded as agents of the Devil. Vulcan, the Roman fire god, was the patron of workers in metal.

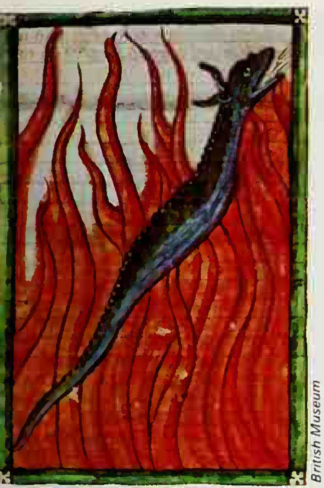
The alchemists, who held that metals were living entities, were likewise Masters of Fire. Their mysterious philosophy involved



British Museum

Above Funeral of Prime Minister Shastri of India; in India cremation on funeral pyre is the regular means of disposal of the dead *Below left* Th flames of an altar fire take the form of a dragon, a sign that a huma sacrifice is required: 14th century Italian illustration of an episode i *The Thebaid* of Statius. The Phoenix (*below right*) ignited its own ne and burnt itself to ashes, to emerge rejuvenated: early 16th century M Another mythical creature, the salamander *(opposite page)* live unharmed within the element of fire: 15th century MS.




British Museum

The salamander, a mythical lizard-like monster, could even live within fire without injury to itself

the doctrine that all physical substances consisted of a combination of body and spirit which, being submitted to fire, left a residue, the ash representing the body and the smoke the soul. They believed that a spark of the divine life descended from the heavens to be embodied in all matter; this suggests the old myth of the original fire having been stolen from the gods.

An essential function of many practitioners of magic was the public demonstration of man's mastery over the fire element. To this end wizards in their ceremonies walked over burning coals or swallowed fire, or handled red hot iron without apparent injury. The hereditary Holy Men of Fiji had the power to walk uninjured over red hot stones, while at the annual festival of the Feast of Fire in India certain adepts have been known to walk a distance of 40 feet over an area of flame.

A further faculty of the magician was the ability to quench fire by magic. The Norse god Odin in his role of wizard, as described in the *Elder Edda*, was master of this mysterious art. It descended during the course of ages to the magical priesthoods and later still to Christian priests and saints who were immune from injury from fire. St Catherine of Siena, for instance, fell into a blazing hearth and emerged unscorched.

Will o' the Wisp

Many complicated and extremely interesting fire rites have survived into modern times among the less sophisticated of the world's communities. It was believed by primitives, for example, that a forest blaze might be quenched by a ceremonial dance performed around a man-made fire, accompanied by the singing of a rain charm. As a means of halting a heavy rain shower by sympathetic magic Australian aborigines will pour water into a fire.

Magical fire precautions of a most primitive kind have been practised in Europe, particularly in Germany, and also in the Germanic areas of the United States. The most effective form of fire insurance was considered to be a text worn as an amulet upon the body, of which the following is an example: 'Like unto the cup and wine and the Holy Supper which our dear Lord gave unto his dear disciples on Maundy Thursday, may the Lord Jesus grant me in day time, and at night, that no dog may bite me, no firearm hurt me, no weapon, no steel, no iron, cut me, no fiends, no witchcraft and enchantment hurt me and no fire burn me.'

Engendered by Friction

We may note, however, that to produce fire in one's own body is a sign that one has transcended the human condition. According to the myths of certain primitive peoples, the aged women of the tribe 'naturally' possessed fire in their genital organs and made use of it to do their cooking but kept it hidden from men, who were able to get possession of it only by trickery. These myths reflect the ideology of a matriarchal society and remind us, also, of the fact that fire, being produced by the friction of two pieces of wood (that is, by their 'sexual union'), was regarded as existing naturally in the piece which represented the female.

Mircea Eliade *The Forge and the Crucible*

The old legend which declared that the spirit of fire, after descending from the remote heavens, made its home among men is echoed in a number of the intriguing folk beliefs of Europe. In Britain the flame which flickers over marshy places, sometimes luring lost travellers to their doom, was thought to be of supernatural origin and was known as Will o' the Wisp or Jack o' Lantern. The mysterious flame called St Elmo's fire, which sometimes clings to the masts of ships at sea, had ominous significance as described in the lines:

> Last night I saw St Elmo's stars
> With their glittering lanterns all at play
> On the tops of the masts and the tips of the spars
> And I knew we should have foul weather that day.

The human soul has also been conceived in terms of fire, taking shape as either a luminous ball or a flickering flame. Reminiscent of the firedrake, dragon guardian of hidden treasures, are those tales in which the souls of the old sea kings glowed as flame above the tumuli or burial mounds where they lay buried with their hoards. Balls of fire observed dancing at night on the shores were regarded by seafaring folk as the souls of drowned sailors eternally seeking rest. Often the soul would be manifested as a bluish light moving from the chamber of death.

In the past, as a special act of deference to the one newly dead, all the household fires were extinguished to relieve the soul from the obligation of paying homage to the hearth, which was the altar of the god of fire where the family ancestors were worshipped. The concept that the soul left the body in the form of a flame inspired an old custom often employed to discover the missing body of a drowned person: a lighted candle was inserted in a crust of bread, which was then floated upon the water, the place where it stopped being the supposed site of the corpse. In this rite the flame was said to symbolize the soul, the bread the husk.

There are innumerable allusions to fire in the world's folk legends, in tales of fantastic cities, castles, thrones and even human beings and trees entirely composed of living flame. Animals and dragons breathing fire persistently haunted the imaginations of our ancestors. The salamander, a mythical lizard-like monster, could even live within fire without injury to itself, while 'salamander's feathers' was the name given by the pagans to asbestos. In the story of the Phoenix of Arabian legend may be observed the continuous theme of fire-lore, the statement that although the elemental may die it is immediately reborn. It was the Phoenix which, after a period of years, ignited its own nest and burned itself to ashes, emerging from the flames pulsating with new life.

Trial by Fire

Other legends tell of young maidens who are made to pass between raging fires as a test of chastity. This motif was reflected in the old trials by ordeal, in which an accused person submitted himself to the judgement of God, seeking to vindicate his innocence by walking barefoot over red hot coals or by carrying a red hot iron in his hand. Theological disputes were at times submitted to the somewhat arbitrary form of judgement by fire, and it was not unknown for conflicting liturgies to be cast into the flames, the one which emerged unscathed being declared the authentic version.

It seems to have been almost universally assumed that evil spirits, like wild animals, could be intimidated by fire. The Indians of South America carry flaming torches when entering the dark forests, not so much for the illumination they provide as to terrify the spirits lurking there. This theme is echoed

Picturepoint London

Mastery over fire was one of the marks of the priest or the magician, and in the past many such practitioners would give public demonstrations of their powers – a tradition continued both by showmen and in certain Eastern cults *Above left* A limbo dancer in a night club in the Bahamas introduces fire into his act to make it more spectacular. The circus fire-eater *(above)* relies on technique but the ability of the fire-walkers in Hong Kong *(above right)* to pass unharmed through flame must be attributed, in the absence of any other explanation, to the power of faith

in Christian practice: at the Feast of St Demetrius in Bulgaria lighted candles are placed in the stables to protect the beasts from the attack of demons.

The power of fire to purify finds expression in the well-known saying, 'I have myself passed through the fire'; the implication is that one is refined by hardship as gold is refined by fire. Dominating the demand for the ritual burning of witches and heretics at the stake lay the same ancient theme of purification by the element of fire. Witches, it was thought, possessed tainted blood that could only be purged by the flame and it was for this same reason that the heretic was burned alive and his ashes broadcast or thrown into a stream. The identical theme is apparent in beliefs about the afterlife, for purgatory, where souls are purged of sin, has been said to be a domain of fires spiritual and physical. Hell, for the damned, was notorious for its invisible flames.

The supervision of hell lay in the hands of a class of beings who in earlier cultures and mythologies had been fire elementals, but who were now degraded to the status of infernal furnace tenders and torturers of the damned.

A typical tool for the original practice of fire-making was a wooden bow, with which a hole was drilled in a piece of wood; the spark produced was then used to ignite a wisp of straw. It has been suggested that the impact upon social life created by this invention must have been equalled perhaps only by the modern discovery of steam. This primitive type of fire-making was commemorated in the well-known custom of making 'need fire', using among other implements a wheel which when turned over oak spindles ignited straw or hay. Need fire, which was lit at times of distress, particularly when the cattle were afflicted by plague, was invariably kindled afresh and never taken from an existing fire. Among the Slavs it was known as 'living' fire.

Bonfire Festivals

The great public fire ceremonies of ancient times were scenes of horrifying cruelty, if the reports of early travellers like the Greek Posidonius are to be believed. Huge wickerwork effigies containing living human beings and animals were set on fire and the ashes afterwards scattered on the soil. The later ceremonies as practised in Europe embodied relics of the original theme of sacrifice, in the burning of effigies or in rites in which pretence was made of hauling a man or woman into the flames.

Fires known in different places as bale fire, wild fire, will fire or neat fire were ignited to signalize the passage of the seasons, for purposes of purification and to revive by sympathetic magic the powers of the declining sun. They were lit to celebrate various points in the year: spring, the beginning of summer, midsummer, the beginning of winter and midwinter. It has been suggested that the Guy Fawkes bonfire ceremony replaced one of these ancient fire ceremonies. The early Church frowned on the pagan implications of these ceremonies but the ban had apparently little effect. The fires were in part at least dedicated to the expulsion of evil in the form of witchcraft, since sorcerers were terrified of fire. It was an old Scandinavian custom, known also in Iceland, to hurl a burning coal after a departing troll wife or witch to neutralize her spells. A relic of the old May Day festival, Beltane, is still celebrated at Peebles, Scotland, and in the early 1920s the custom was instituted in Cornwall of lighting a chain of bonfires on St John's Eve (23 June). A sickle was cast into the flames followed by the chant:

> In one bunch together bound
> Bonfire blossoms here are found
> Both good and ill:
> Thousandfold let good seed spring
> While ill weeds, fast withering
> This fire shall kill.

An even more recent innovation has been the introduction of fire-leaping ceremonies by

Barnaby's Picture Library

he exponents of the modern version of vitchcraft, as popularized by the late Dr ierald Gardner of the Isle of Man. These erformances are carried out in secluded laces on the old seasonal feast days, sually in strict privacy but occasionally in ront of television cameras.

In domestic spheres a remnant of ancient re magic has persisted in a number of urious hearth superstitions, now disappearng under the impact of artificial forms of eating. Many people believe that a poker laced in an upright position against the re bars to form a cross helps the fire to urn, while others consider that if the rays f the sun are permitted to shine upon the earth the fire will go out. Sometimes the uture is read from the state of the ashes. This custom was long practised in Yorkshire on the Eve of St Mark (24 April) to determine who in the family was destined to die next.

A General Conflagration

Fire being the seed of all existing things, to which they must in time again return, has suggested to generations of pyromaniacs the alarming idea that if humanity could only be consumed entire then it must, as a matter of course, arise from the flames renewed and purified; this doctrine became popular in 17th century England. One of the most notorious symbols of this revolutionary epoch was Solomon Eccles, a fanatical prophet of doom who walked through the streets of London in the nude, bearing a cauldron of burning brimstone upon his head.

A flaming torch is the symbol of freedom in New York's Statue of Liberty; and the same significance underlies the action of young men of the East and West who in recent times have set light to themselves, committing suicide as living torches, in affirmation of religious or political faith. (See also ASHES; CREMATION; ELEMENTS; HEARTH; ORDEAL; SACRIFICE.)

ERIC MAPLE

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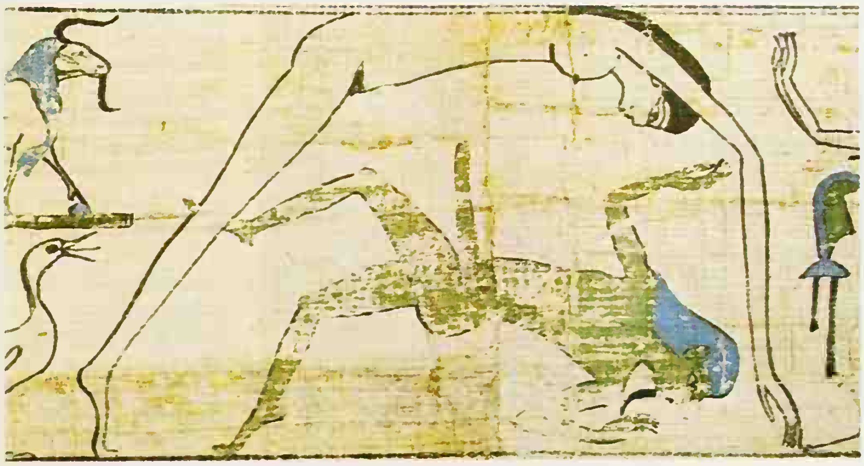


Michael Holford

Firmament

The vault of the heavens: it was generally viewed in the ancient world as a solid crystal sphere, constantly rotating, to which the stars were fixed; it contained windows through which the waters above the firmament fell as rain; later it was thought of as the eighth sphere surrounding the seven spheres of the planets.

A beginning, anything new, a 'first time' of any kind, whether it be joyful or alarming, is specially significant; both these elements are implied in the rituals and precautions surrounding New Year's Day or the first sight of the new moon. The first child of a marriage, like the first fruits of the harvest, is particularly precious and for this reason to sacrifice it to the gods is a mark of the highest devotion

FIRST

THE OFFERING OF THE FIRST-BORN is the theme of one of the most dramatic stories in the book of Genesis (chapter 22.1–19). It concerns Abraham, the great patriarch of the Hebrew people, and in its present form it is clearly intended to demonstrate his unflinching faith in Yahweh, the god of Israel (see YAHWEH). However, the story was obviously based upon a very primitive custom, and in its original form it was doubtless an aetiological myth, that is, a myth designed to explain the cause of something.

The original theme is concisely stated in the opening verses. Yahweh is represented as commanding Abraham: 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.' Abraham is obedient to the terrible command, and the narrative vividly describes the journey and the preparations for the sacrifice. Having built an altar and laid his son, bound, thereon, 'Abraham put forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.' At this fatal moment, the angel of Yahweh intervenes and Isaac is saved. Then, instead of his son, Abraham sacrifices a ram, 'caught in a thicket by his horns'. The episode ends with Yahweh again addressing Abraham: 'By myself I have sworn . . . because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore.' Thus the story achieves its conclusion of showing how Yahweh, having tested the faith of Abraham, promised that his descendants would henceforth become a great nation.

But behind this edifying tale of Abraham's faith there is clearly another purpose, that of explaining how an ancient custom of sacrificing first-born sons to Yahweh was superseded by the offering of an animal victim. There is an abundance of evidence in the Hebrew scriptures that such a custom was once observed by the ancient Israelites. For instance, in the ritual law set forth in the book of Exodus, Yahweh is depicted as commanding Moses: 'Consecrate to me all the first-born; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine. . . . Every firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every first-born of a man among your sons you shall redeem' (chapter 13). The reason assigned for this savage practice is that it commemorates Israel's exodus from Egypt, when Yahweh 'slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of cattle'. But this historicized explanation is typical of many others given in the Bible to account for ritual customs of which the origin was unknown in later times.

The ritual killing of the first-born is found elsewhere among primitive peoples. It seems in origin to have been a propitiatory rite addressed to supernatural powers to ensure their benign attitude towards later offspring. There could be some variation of motive: for example, the first-born son could be made a sacrifice for the well-being of a city or offered as a vicarious sacrifice made by a father for his sin. 'Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' asks the prophet Micah.

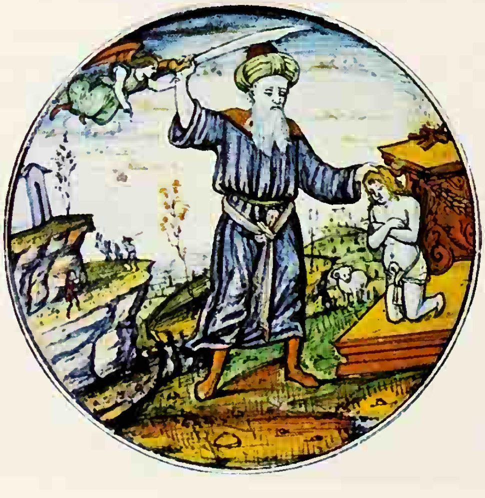
Babies Buried in Jars

The many skeletons of infants buried in jars which have been found on Canaanite sites attest to the practice of infant sacrifice among the ancient inhabitants of Canaan. In a revealing passage, describing the reforms of King Josiah at Jerusalem, it is recorded: 'he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech' (2 Kings 23.10). It is now generally accepted that the word 'Molech' was not the name of a god but a technical term for child sacrifice, indicating that the Israelites were once accustomed to burn their children as sacrifices, probably to Yahweh.

The same custom was practised by other Semitic peoples, for instance the Phoenicians and Carthaginians; the calcined bones of children, sacrificed to Tanit and Baal-Hammon, have been found at Carthage. Other forms of the sacrifice of the first-born among non-Semitic peoples are recorded by J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*.

Every departure from the familiar in the life of mankind is in effect a step into the dark, a journey into the dangerous unknown. In primitive societies that are dominated by superstition, each new occurrence is generally regarded as potentially harmful unless its impact can be countered by rites specially devised to placate the gods. The passage of the seasons, the displacement of the old by the new, were once believed to be disturbing processes. The first action undertaken and the first object received, even the emergence of the new crop in the fields or the birth of a child, could be a source of danger to the community unless made safe by magical rites.

Painting from a 16th century Italian dish showing Abraham about to sacrifice his son Isaac: the biblical story points to an ancient practice among the Israelites of sacrificing the first-born child to God



Michael Holford

From time immemorial it has been the custom among many of the world's people to consume the first fruits of the harvest in a ceremonial feast, or dedicate it wholly or in part to the tribal deity, as a method of offsetting the jealousy of the gods or the envious dead, or the spirit of the crop itself. Fishermen in many countries nail the first fish of the season to the ship's mast and believe that it is possible to determine from its sex the prospects of the forthcoming fishing season. If the fish is female the hauls are expected to be good, but if it is male, poor. Closely allied to this custom is the importance attached to the first coin received by a merchant in his day's takings. Handsel money, as it is called, must be first spat upon and then kept separately in the pocket to ensure a good day's trading. Theatrical people believe it possible to determine the fate of a new production from the age of the purchaser of the first ticket. If he or she is old the production will have a long run; if young the future of the show is bleak.

Stepping Into Danger

The belief that the future of a building had to be insured against evil and misfortune on completion, before it was safe to use, lies at the root of many foundation rites, including the sacrifice of young children (see BUILDERS' RITES). The old terror of human sacrifice in turn probably reinforced the superstition that it is dangerous to be the first to enter a new house. Some form of protection is afforded, however, by taking the initial step with the right foot. The new bride is also shielded from baleful influences when she enters her home for the first time by being carried over the threshold. But in America this custom may spring from the old superstition that the first one of the newly-weds to step over the threshold will be the first to die.

Primary actions of any kind have all the force of magic behind them, a very well-known example being the 'crossing the line' ceremony with its mock ordeal and its attendant galaxy of sea gods. The significance of first actions permeates our superstitions. The seamstress who puts the first stitch in a bridal dress will be married within the year. In love magic, if nine peas are found in the first pod opened by an unmarried girl and one of these is placed on the lintel of the outer door, the first single man who crosses the threshold afterwards will be the one she will marry.

The newly-born child was believed to be extremely vulnerable to the influence of witchcraft in its first few days of life, and its first and therefore magically potent gifts often included salt, which was thought to

Crossing the line': at sea each person rossing the Equator for the first time is eremonially drenched, while 'King Neptune' irects operations

Picturepoint London

rovide protection against the forces of evil. There was a time when even the first kiss eceived by a baby from any individual other han its mother was thought to transmit to he child the characteristics of the person vho gave it; great care had to be exercised n warding off undesirable people.

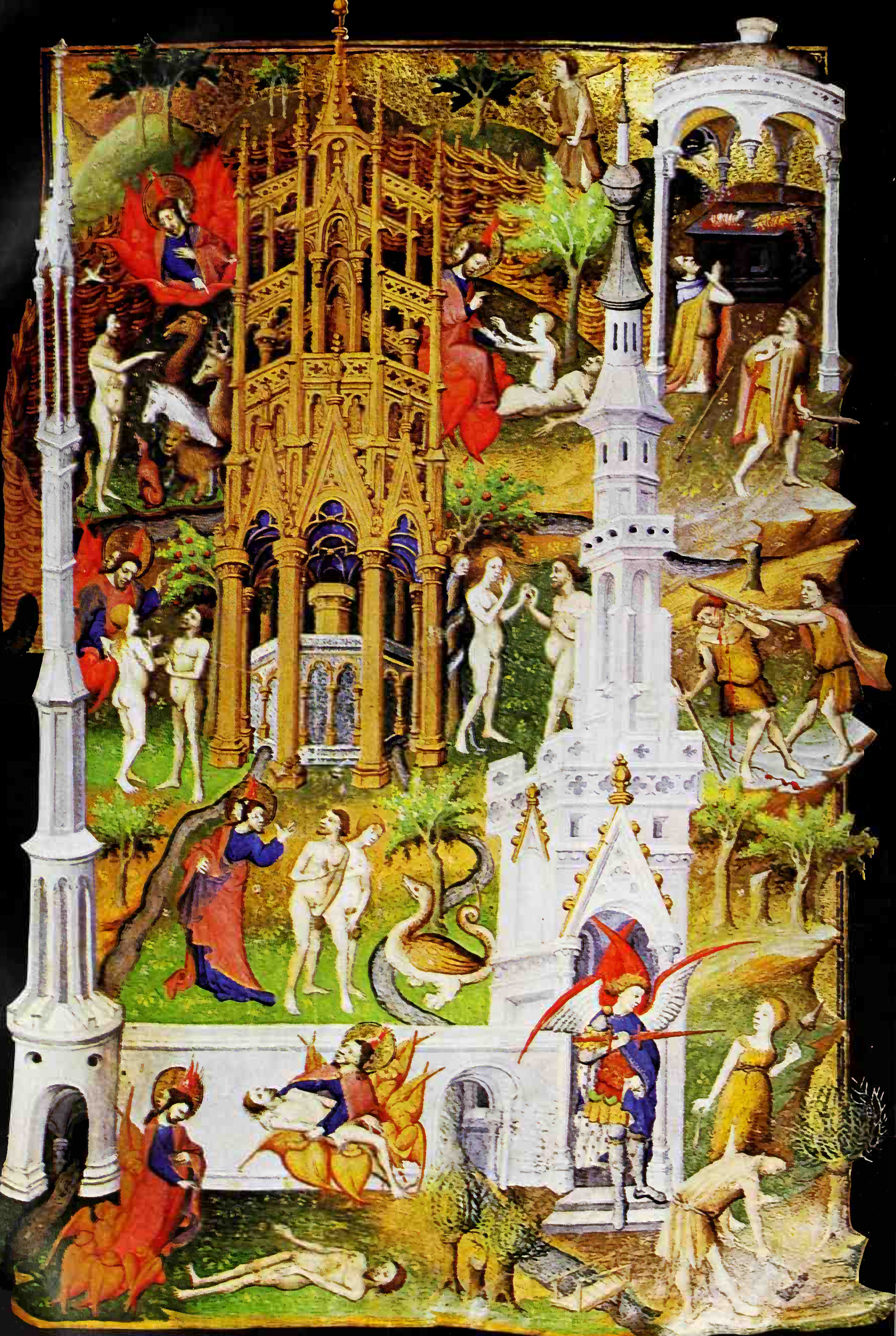
Even greater dangers might face the dead, or the soul of the first person to be laid to est in a new cemetery was assumed to ecome automatically the property of the Devil. Until very recently it was the custom n parts of eastern England for children to lance seven times round the oldest (or first) gravestone in a churchyard and at the conlusion to place their ears close to the ground and listen for the sound of 'the Devil rattling his chains'.

The New Year

The sense of wonder tinged with alarm at he transition from one phase of time into he next provides the motive force for those magical ceremonies which are still observed by the adult community. At the first sight of the new moon many people continue to urn over their money, reciting at the same ime the ritual words 'white rabbits' as a charm to encourage good fortune during the next four weeks. With the emergence of the New Year the church bells acclaim the presence of a renewed first moment in time in vhich all enter a state of ritual rebirth. In the United States, the custom in most owns and cities of greeting the New Year's arrival with a prolonged torrent of noise, ar greater than mere bell-ringing, resembles primitive noise-making to frighten off devils. Perhaps in this way the New Year noise clears the air of the previous year's evil, allowing for a fresh start.

In a practice that extends from East to Vest, the household prepares to usher in the New Year in symbolic form. In the British sles the New Year will be represented by he first male person to cross the threshold fter midnight, known as either First Foot or Lucky Bird. He must be tall and dark naired, and also bear token gifts representng the basic needs of the household for the ear: money, coal and a piece of bread. It is mportant that there should be nothing illmened about his appearance and those with rossed eyes or with eyebrows that meet cross the brow are rigorously excluded, ince these are signs of the Evil Eye, the first glance of which is doubly lethal. American belief, where the 'first footing' custom still holds, finds other ill omens if the first visitor is a widower, or red-headed.
(See also NEW YEAR.)

FURTHER READING: For sacrifice of the first-born, see: D. Harden, *The Phoenicians* (Thames & Hudson, London, 1962); J. Hastings (ed.) *Dictionary of the Bible* (Scribner, 1963). For 'first' generally, see: M. Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (Fontana, London, 1968); C. Hole, *English Folklore* (Scribner, 1940).



The story of the garden of Eden has been interpreted in ways as various as the doctrine of original sin and the belief that nudism is virtuous. It has kept its long hold on humanity because it deals with matters of vital human importance – evil, death, love, and the gulf between man and God

FIRST MAN

SOME GROUPS OF HUMAN BEINGS believe that they are closely related to animals and trace their descent from an ancestor who had both human and animal characteristics (see ANIMALS; AUSTRALIA; TOTEM). Others say that men are descended from the sun, whose light and heat preserve all life in the world. According to an Indian myth, for instance, the first man and woman were the twins Yama and Yima, who were children of the sun. There is a Maori story that the first human being was made of earth and given life by the sun: 'it was the sunlight fertilizing the Earth Mother.' The Zuni Indians of New Mexico said that men and all living things were the children of the sun and the earth. Elsewhere the sky and the earth are the original ancestors of humanity (see EARTH).

There is a very widespread tendency to give the earth an important role in the creation of the first human beings, sometimes in association with plants, which suggests a poetic parallel between human life and the life of vegetation, both springing from the earth and returning to it again in death. A striking example is a Pawnee story of how Mother Corn led the first men up to the earth's surface.

> Before the World was we were all within the
>   Earth.
> Mother Corn caused movement. She gave life.
> Life being given we moved towards the surface:
> We shall stand erect as men!
> The being is become human! He is a person!

Another example is Gayomart, who shone like the sun, the Zoroastrian first man. Gayomart was killed by Ahriman, the evil power, but his seed fell into the earth and from it there grew a rhubarb plant which turned into the first human couple. (See AHRIMAN.)

A Greek myth says that the first men, the 'golden race', were born from Earth. 'These men . . . lived without cares or labour, eating only acorns, wild fruit, and honey that dripped from the trees, drinking the milk of sheep and goats, never growing old, dancing, and laughing much; death, to them, was no more terrible than sleep' (Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*).

Various episodes from the story of Adam and Eve are depicted in this illustration from the 15th century *Bedford Book of Hours*: within the garden of Eden, Adam names the beasts, God takes Eve from Adam's side, the guilty pair eat fruit from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge and are condemned by God; outside the garden Adam and Eve labour as their son Cain kills his brother Abel

Sometimes the human body is said to be made of earth, fashioned of clay. The Shilluk of the White Nile accounted for differences in skin colour by the differently coloured clay from which the various races of men were made. The Sumerian god Enki caused human beings to be made of clay and the Egyptian god Khnum was believed to fashion men on a potter's wheel (see CREATION MYTHS).

Some of these themes also appear in the first man myth which has had far and away the greatest influence on the western world, the story of Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve

Perhaps no story ever told has been subjected to such a weight of exhaustive analysis and learned criticism as the opening chapters of Genesis. The great 19th century controversy has died away and it is now generally accepted that the world and man were not created in the way that Genesis describes; which is not to deny that Genesis contains truth of a different sort. It is also generally accepted that Genesis was influenced by the myths of other eastern peoples, the neighbours of the Jews. But in the quality of its insight into the human condition Genesis stands alone.

There are two different stories of the creation of man in Genesis. The first, in chapter 1, is the 'official' version, preserved by the Jewish priests. God created man 'in his own image', as an inferior copy of himself (an idea also found in Babylonian mythology). The point is not merely that God is thought of in human form but that man is thought of in divine form, as a miniature replica of God, which has provided a biblical basis for the theory that man is potentially God and can eventually become God.

God created male and female, ordered them to 'be fruitful and multiply' and gave them the lordship of all living things. The Hebrew word used for man is *adam*, which later in Genesis is the name of the first man, though most modern interpreters maintain that *adam* here means 'mankind' in general.

The second story (starting at Genesis 2.4) is longer, more vivid and older. It seems to have been a more popular version than the official, priestly account, with which it conflicts on various points of detail. It is the familiar tale of Adam and Eve, the forbidden fruit and the serpent, and it is clearly concerned with a couple who were the first of the human species.

Adam and the Angels

We created man from dry clay, from black moulded loam, and before him Satan from smokeless fire. Your Lord said to the angels: 'I am creating man from dry clay, from black moulded loam. When I have fashioned him and breathed of my spirit into him, kneel down and prostrate yourselves before him.'

All the angels prostrated themselves, except Satan. He refused to prostrate himself.

'Satan,' said Allah, 'why do you not prostrate yourself?'

He replied: 'I will not bow to a mortal created of dry clay, of black moulded loam.'

'Begone,' said Allah, 'you are accursed. My curse shall be on you till Judgement-day . . .'

'Lord,' said Satan, 'since you have led me astray, I will seduce mankind on earth: I will seduce them all, except those that faithfully serve you.'

The Koran

Adam and Death

The devil is a skilful enemy; how many palms he has won! consider to what he has cast us down! That we are born mortal comes of this, that he in the first place cast down from Paradise our first ancestor!

St Augustine

In this light, actual death becomes a visible demonstration of the fissure between God and man which cleaves man's being to its very essence and which was opened at the very beginning of his spiritual moral history . . . Man's death is the demonstration of the fact that he has fallen away from God.

Karl Rahner *On the Theology of Death*

The Making and Fall of Man

God formed a man out of dust from the ground, an implied play on the words *adam* (man) and *adamah* (earth). God breathed into the man's nose to give him life (another widespread theme – see BREATH), which provided a basis for the later sharp distinction between man's 'spirit' – the pure and godlike part of him – and his earthy material body with its earthy habits and desires, the part of man's being which so many ascetics and puritans have tried to suppress.

When he had given man life, God planted a garden for him 'in Eden, in the east'. Eden means 'pleasure, luxury' and judging from the description of its rivers, it was somewhere to the north of Mesopotamia. In the paradise garden was every tree which is beautiful to look at and whose fruit is good to eat. There were also the Tree of Life, whose fruit brought immortality, and the Tree of Knowledge, whose fruit Adam was forbidden to eat on pain of death.

God decided to give the man a helper. He made the animals and birds, also from earth, and brought them to Adam, who gave them all their names. But none of them qualified as a suitable helper and so God 'built' a woman from one of Adam's ribs. Adam hailed her with delight as 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' and her making from his body is the origin of human love. He named her *Hawwah* (which became Eva in Greek, Eve in English), meaning 'the mother of all living' – a play on words, linking her name with *havah*, 'to live'.

Next comes the entrance of the serpent, the most subtle of animals. The serpent told Eve that eating the forbidden fruit would not bring death: on the contrary, 'God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So Eve picked the fruit and gave some to Adam and they both ate it. The immediate consequence was that they felt shame at being naked and made themselves aprons of fig leaves. In other words, the story refers the association of guilt and shame with sex to this original disobedience of God's orders (an idea echoed by Milton in *Paradise Lost*).

God discovered what Adam and Eve had done – Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent – and punished them with death, with the pain of childbirth, with the subjection of woman to man, and with hard work. To prevent Adam from eating the fruit of the Tree of Life and becoming immortal, God drove Adam and Eve from Eden and set an angel with a flaming sword to guard it.

The Meaning of the Story

It is clear that death was one of the punishments for Adam's crime but not clear in what sense. The story may have meant, originally, that man would have been immortal if Adam and Eve had not disobeyed God. Or it may have meant (a more sophisticated, perhaps too sophisticated, explanation) that man was subject to death in any case but would have seen it not as something frightening and cruel but as his natural end, 'no more terrible than sleep'.

Essentially, the story is about the double nature of man, a creature whose life is made of labour, pain, frustration, defeat and death but who knows himself capable of finer things, who has his moments of joy, beauty, splendour and power: man who is half animal and half God. Genesis says that the evils which afflict man came to him because he disobeyed God. 'By wanting to be like God,' as Gerhard von Rad puts it, 'man stepped out from the simplicity of obedience to God. He thereby forfeited life in the pleasant garden and close to God.'

That the serpent was the Devil is a later belief – Genesis does not say so – but the temptation the serpent offered was the possibility of becoming 'like God', of achieving all-embracing, superhuman power, which is the central aim of black magic. The Genesis story describes how man, who stands midway between the animals and God, tries to become God. In doing so, he overreaches himself and brings evil into the world. From a modern point of view, the story sees the roots of evil in man's refusal to submit tamely to the conditions in which he finds himself, in his attempts to master everything about him and, in this sense, to make himself God.

The Two Trees

The significance of the two trees is very unclear, and there may have been only one tree in the original story. If it was the Tree of Life, Adam was not forbidden to eat its fruit and parallels in other myths suggest that the serpent's role in the original story was to steal the fruit of the Tree of Life and so obtain the immortality intended for man.

Alternatively, S. G. F. Brandon has suggested that the tree in the original story was the Tree of Knowledge, and that by eating its fruit Adam and Eve acquired the knowledge of sex, knowledge of the means of reproducing life: it was this knowledge that made them 'like God', the creator of life. And this brought death upon them because of the myth of the overcrowded earth, the widespread belief that if birth exists but not death, the world will quickly become hopelessly overcrowded: death is the only solution.

The Wickedness of Woman

For hundreds of years, Eve's part in the story has powerfully reinforced the feeling, which spreads far beyond Jewish and Christian tradition, that woman is inherently evil. It was Eve who succumbed to the serpent's temptation and the legend grew up that the serpent had physically seduced Eve, infecting all her descendants with abominable lust. It was Eve who persuaded the weak-willed Adam to eat the fruit and so it was Eve who was responsible for the evils that the crime in Eden unleashed on humanity. 'From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die' (Ecclesiasticus 25.24).

In the late 2nd century AD the Christian writer Tertullian castigated women with, 'Do you not know that each of you is also an Eve? . . . You are the devil's gateway, you are the unsealer of that forbidden tree, you are the first deserter of that divine law, you are the one who persuaded him whom the devil was too weak to attack. How easily you destroyed man, the image of God! Because of the death which you brought upon us, even the son of God had to die . . .'

Origin of the Two Sexes

Genesis says that Adam was the father of Cain, Abel, Seth and other children, and died at the age of 930. According to other Jewish traditions, he wrote some of the Psalms (numbers 5, 19, 24, 92, 132) and his grave was in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, to the south of Jerusalem, where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were also believed to be buried. Christian tradition placed his grave at Golgotha where Jesus was crucified. This is the origin of the custom of showing a skull at the foot of the cross in paintings and sculpture, and is based on the link which Christians saw between Adam, who alienated man from God, and Christ, the second Adam, who reunited man with God.

Jewish stories said that Adam was originally a man on his right side and a woman on his left (the side of evil), and God separated the two halves. Or Adam and Eve were joined at the shoulders, back to back, and God split them in two with an axe. These tales were probably meant to reconcile the making of man in God's image with the belief that God is beyond sex and incorporates both male and female in himself. If Adam was a copy of God he must have been bisexual. The idea is present in the Genesis story, perhaps for the same reason, Eve being made from Adam's body.

Another story was that the angels were jealous of Adam. Some of them advised God against creating him in the first place but were destroyed by God in a rage. When Adam had been created, the Archangel Michael commanded the host of heaven to fall down and worship him. They all obeyed except Satan, who was too proud and was hurled out of heaven in punishment. Some writers explained that this was why Satan tempted Eve in the form of a serpent, to revenge himself on Adam. The story survives in the Koran.

The belief that the angels were jealous of man is part of the tendency of later Jewish writers to drawing glowing pictures of the glory and wisdom of Adam in Eden before the Fall. He was unimaginably beautiful, he looked like one of the angels, his skin was like a shining robe, and the ball of his heel outdid the sun in splendour. His body was so huge that it filled up the space between the earth and the sky, and stretched from one end of the earth to the other.

These notions seem comically exaggerated but there was serious feeling behind them. They stemmed from the belief that man was not condemned for ever to toil, pain and death but would one day recover Adam's greatness and beauty. Adam was the pattern of what God had intended man to be. He had fallen from grace but in days to come, when the Messiah appeared, the righteous would be restored to the splendour meant for man.

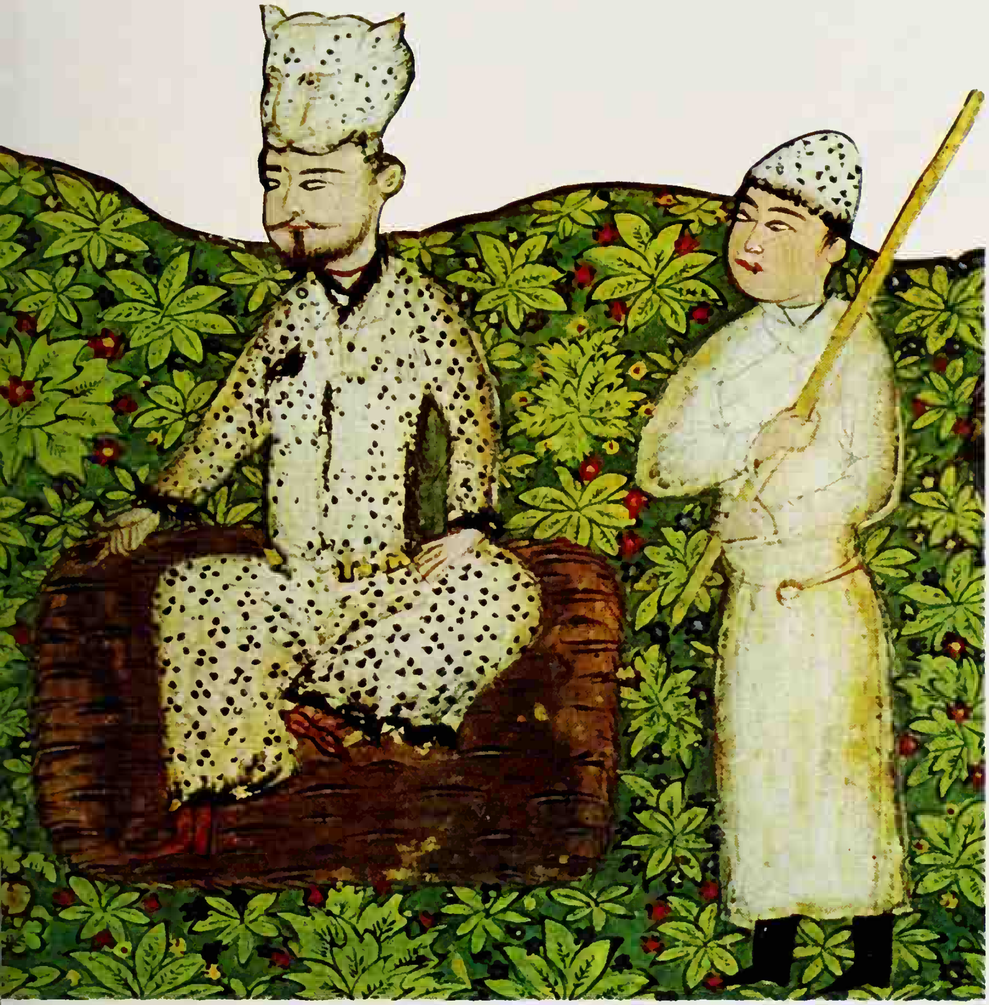
To the Christians, Jesus was the Messiah, and St Paul – who was, of course, a Jew and familiar with the teachings of the rabbis – explained that Christ has brought back to man the glory which Adam had lost. One of St Paul's great themes was the contrast between Adam, who had plunged all men into death and the power of the Devil, and Christ who had come to mankind's rescue. At least as far back as the 7th century, Christians called Adam's disobedience 'the fortunate sin' (*felix culpa*) because it had made necessary the coming of Christ. In other contexts, however, Christians did not take so kindly a view of Adam's crime.

Original Sin

Genesis does not say that Adam's rebellion infected all mankind with what was afterwards called 'original sin' – a germ of wickedness endemic in human nature so that babies at birth are already sinners. That death and the other penalties for Adam's sin have been transmitted to all later generations is clearly implied, and the Jews inherited from their nomad ancestors the tradition that the father of a family was its representative. If he committed a crime, the rest of the family were automatically implicated and had to take the consequences. The story of Achan (Joshua, chapter 7) is an example, and there was a popular saying that 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge', which is quoted with disapproval by Ezekiel (chapter 18). But although Jewish writers accepted that men have inherited the punishment of Adam's disobedience, most of them did not believe that men have inherited his sinfulness.

Whether St Paul invented the Christian doctrine of original sin or not is disputed. John Hick, summarizing the opinions of most commentators, says that St Paul believed that all men die because of Adam's sin; that all men have inherited from Adam a tendency to sin; that all men do in fact sin as a result of this tendency; and that Christ came to abolish sin and death. He concludes that, 'There is thus clearly present in St Paul the root idea of what was later to be called "original sin".'

The early Church had to contend with gnostic theories which saw the world as a thoroughly evil place that must have been made by a thoroughly evil god. Convinced



Giraudon

Gayomart, the first man of Zoroastrian legend, reclines on a tiger skin: his seed fell into the earth and became a rhubarb plant which turned into the first human couple; 15th century Persian manuscript

hat God is good, Christians needed an xplanation of how evil had entered the orld and man, which God had created. Vhatever St Paul may have intended, one f the explanations adopted was based on Romans 5.12, which in the original Greek ays that sin and death entered the world hrough one man (Adam) and death came to ll men, *for* all men sinned. The verse was nistranslated into Latin to read that sin nd death entered the world through one nan *in whom* all men sinned. St Augustine, vho was primarily responsible for fastening he doctrine firmly into the fabric of Roman atholic orthodoxy – and who was the first o use the term 'original sin' itself, in a work vritten in 397 – read Romans 5.12 in the atin translation.

St Augustine thought different things at ifferent times and a brief summary does not o him justice, but he believed that in Eden efore the Fall Adam was wise and happy, ree of disease, old age and death. He sinned y rebelling against God and his sin was nherited by the entire human race, who were is descendants and who were 'seminally resent' in his loins. It follows that babies vho die before they are baptized go straight o the Devil's clutches in hell, though St ugustine did suggest that the tortures inicted on them might be comparatively mild.

Some Gnostics of the early centuries fter Christ identified the god of the Old estament as the evil being who created the vil world. This naturally involved them in tanding the Old Testament stories on their eads. The god who made man was now an evil power and the serpent, the tempter, became a virtuous creature, sent by the good supreme God to teach Adam and Eve the knowledge of good and evil so that they could see for themselves the evil nature of the world which the Jewish god had made.

Gnosticism, Mysticism, Nudism

According to the gnostic 'Secret Book of John', for example, man was created by the god of the Jews, an evil supernatural being named Ialdabaoth (probably a corruption of Jehovah Sabaoth). He seduced Eve after the expulsion from Eden and fathered on her the two sons men call Cain and Abel, but whose real names are Jehovah and Elohim. The one has a face like a bear and the other like a cat. (Elohim, like Jehovah, is a name of God in the Old Testament.)

In Manichean theory, Adam was created by an evil power, begotten of the coupling of two great demons as a receptacle for certain particles of heavenly light, which had been captured by the forces of darkness. The Adam the demons produced was blind, deaf, fast asleep and unconscious of the divine light within him but the sowers of light sent a redeemer – called Ohrmazd or the Son of God or brilliant Jesus or Jesus the brilliant light – to rescue him. From his demon ancestors man has inherited his physical body and its desires but he also contains the divine light.

The Manichean Adam was spawned by evil as a copy of the heavenly 'primeval man', who had earlier been created by the powers of light. The two different creation stories in Genesis encouraged some Jewish and Gnostic writers to suggest that the first story describes the making of the ideal 'heavenly man', the image of God, a spiritual, non-material being who combined both sexes in himself; and that the second story describes the making of actual earthly man, a being who is part spirit and part matter (his body, made of earth) and who is divided into two sexes. Here again is the theme of the dual nature of man, material and spiritual, animal and divine.

The idea survived in Jacob Boehme's theory (which powerfully influenced William Blake) that there were two Falls. The original Adam was an angelic spiritual being, immortal, bisexual and virgin. He fell for the first time in acquiring a physical body and dividing into male and female. This was followed by the second Fall when the serpent successfully tempted Eve, bringing death and the necessity for reproduction of the species because man was no longer immortal. As in gnostic theory, everything which is physical, material, earthly is regarded as evil, and in particular sex.

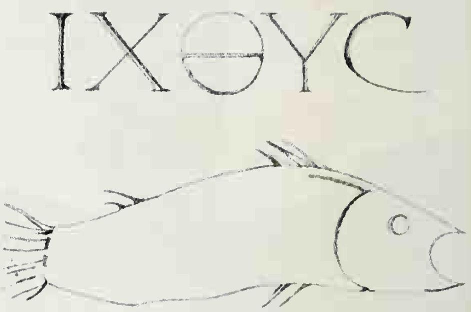
The belief that the original Adam was the perfect pattern of humanity, which man had lost but might regain, inspired various medieval heretics to maintain that men and women should go about naked and refrain entirely from work, which would restore them to the state of perfection of Adam and Eve in Eden before the Fall. In 1925 a group of Adamites were discovered in California. Their leader was Eve recreated, her husband was Adam and their farm was the Garden of Eden. They used to dance naked in the farmyard round a bonfire and a lamb was burnt alive on at least one occasion. It is a far cry from the beauty and far-reaching significance of the Old Testament story but the Adamite heresy may perhaps have contributed to the notion that nudism is physically and psychologically healthy.

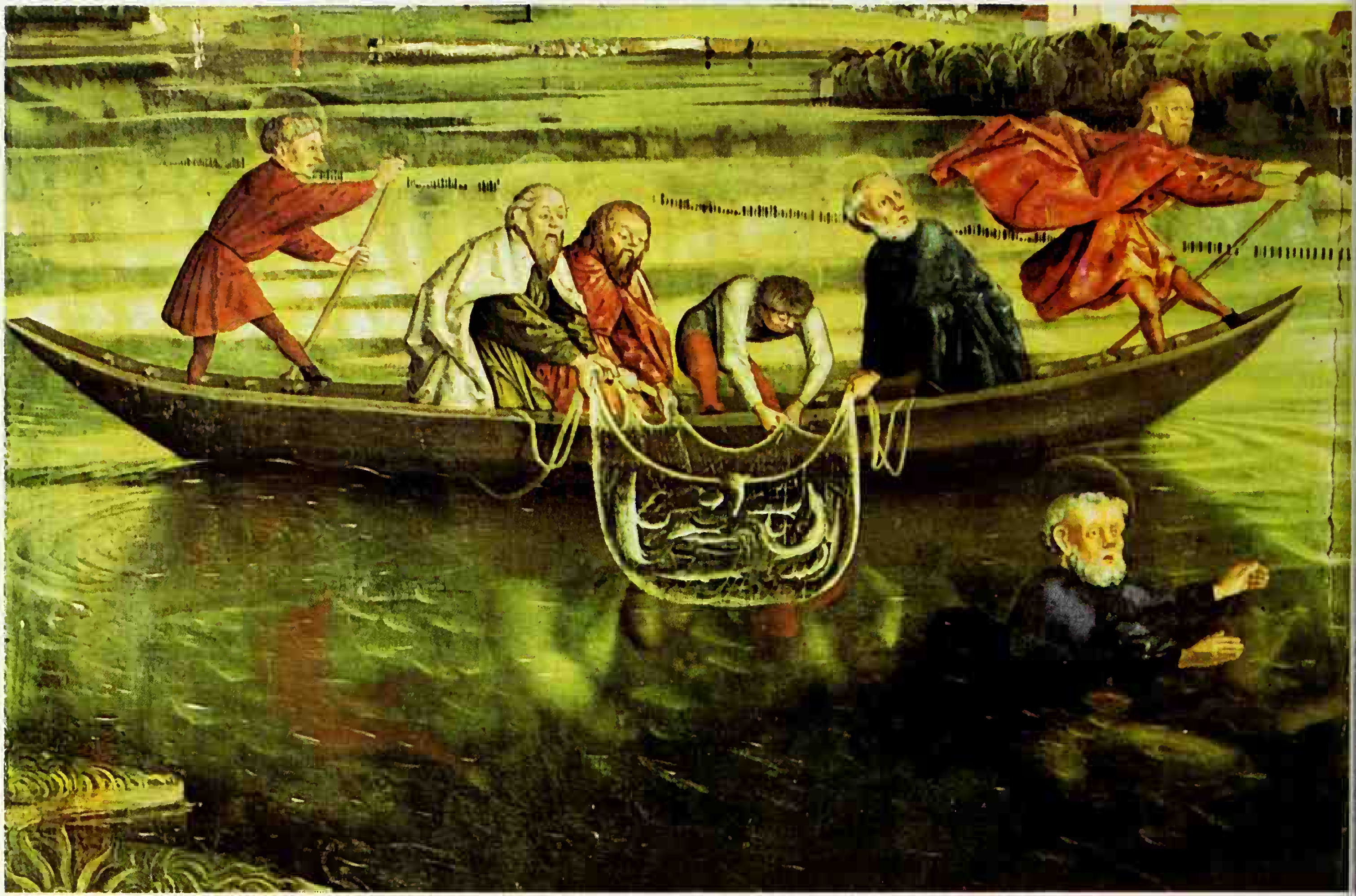
(See also EVIL; MAN.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 1; S. E. Hooke, 'Genesis' in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (Harper and Row); S. G. F. Brandon, *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East* (Verry, Lawrence, 1963). For later Jewish and Christian beliefs, see Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths* (McGraw-Hill, 1966); Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam* (Fortress Press, 1966). On original sin and the problem of evil, see N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin* (AMS Press, reprint). For a modern summary of Christian views, see John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (Harper & Row, rev. ed., 1977) and for a modern Roman Catholic view, Karl Rahner, *On the Theology of Death* (Nelson, London, 1961). See also M. Eliade (ed.), *From Primitives to Zen* (Harper & Row, 1978).

FISH





Top **Early Christian sign of the fish *Above* 'The Miraculous Draught of Fishes' by the 15th-century Swiss painter Konrad Witz *Opposite* the giant fish spews out Jonah on dry land; illustration from a 15th-century French Bible**

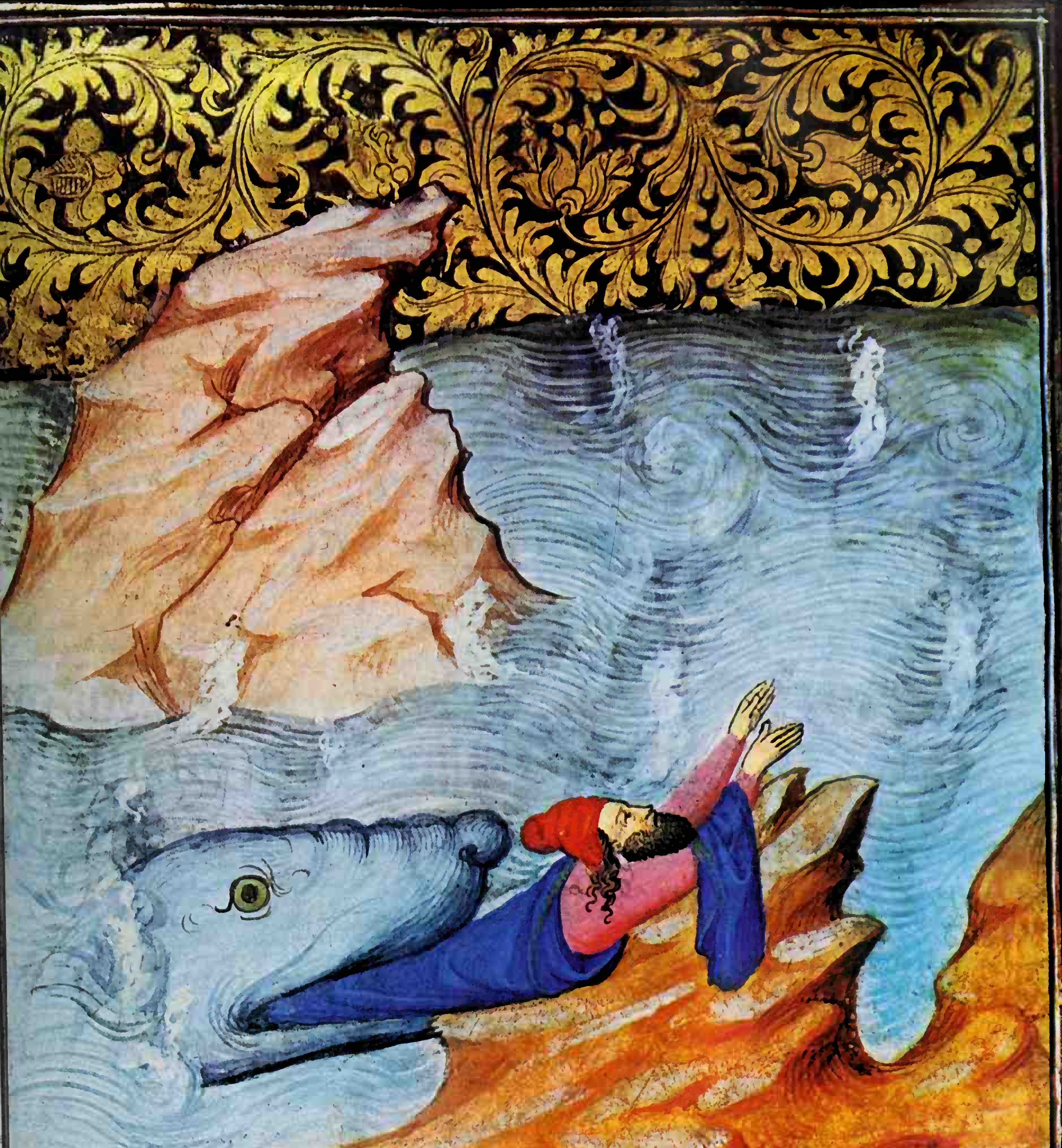
On the walls of the catacombs of Rome are scratched representations of a fish, for to the early Christians the fish was the symbol of Christ. Inhabitants of a mysterious and alien world, since ancient times fish have been associated with the sacred and the supernatural

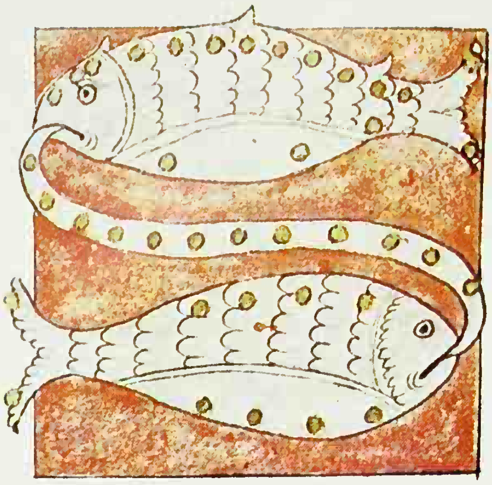
MANY MEANINGS are embodied in the fish, reflecting the various facets of its nature. Because of its affinity to the sea, from which all created life originated, it was widely held to be sacred. Like the Leviathan, the fabulous fish that bore the whole weight of the world upon its back, the cosmic fish is the symbol of the physical universe. The fish is also a symbol of sexual activity, because of its fecundity.

In the lore of the ancient Chaldeans, the swallow-headed fish was the expression of psychic regeneration, as was Pisces, the sign of the fish and the last sign of the zodiac. Pisces is closely bound up with the symbolism of water, while those born under the sign are said to have some of the characteristics of the fish.

In Asia certain cults practised fish worship and to their priesthoods the flesh of fish was taboo. Even at the most primitive level fish worship has persisted until modern times. The Indians of Peru not only revered those fish which came to their nets in the greatest profusion but held the doctrine that the first fish created in the world above bore the name 'Heaven' and was the mother of all the others. The zoologists of the ancient world tended to the belief that fish were the spontaneous creations of the water itself, and in a Sumerian legend the first fish to rise from the primordial waters became the teacher of the arts of civilization to men.

Innumerable are the legends of creatures half-human and half-fish haunting the rivers and coasts of the world (see MERMAIDS AND MERMEN). It is significant in this respect that the Sumerian god Ea, god of the waters, had a body like a fish, the tail of a fish and feet below like a man's.





Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

The kraken was about a mile and a half in circumference and so vast as to be frequently mistaken for an island

Above **Pisces, the sign of the fishes, is formed of two constellations joined by ribbons of stars; in Syrian legend it was connected with the sacred fish of the goddess Derceto or Atargatis**

The existence of a fish cult in the Near East is by no means conclusive, although it is strongly suggested by the fact that the Syrian form of the goddess Derceto was a fish and also that her son Tammuz was probably associated with a fish. Under the name of Atargatis this deity has been identified as a local form of the Semitic Ishtar-Astarte, goddess of fertility and water. There were sacred fish ponds at Edessa and Ascalon and at Hierapolis where the fish grew to an immense size and would answer to their names. Atargatis is said to have descended into the sacred pond at Hierapolis and to have returned to heaven bearing a fish – the ancestor of the Pisces sign of the zodiac.

Dagon, god of the Philistines, has been considered a fish god. This idea probably arose from a confusion between *dag*, meaning fish, and *dagan*, meaning corn, for there is every reason to believe that he was a corn deity. In Assyrian monuments, however, a god named Dakan or Dagan is represented as a man with the tail of a fish. Nina the divinity of Lagash, who was the patroness of fishermen and goddess of maternity, was in fact a corn spirit who received offerings of fish. Egypt, where the harvest was the gift of the River Nile, provided a fusion of aquatic and agricultural symbolism in the Egyptian fish deity Rem, who wept fertilizing tears over the land. In India the creative gods Brahma and Vishnu could take the forms of fishes. The first man, Manu, is told by a fish in the Indian version of the flood story to build a ship to save himself from the coming deluge.

Fish have been consumed as holy food, and at the heart of Jewish fish symbolism is the belief that at the end of the world Messias will catch the great fish Leviathan and divide its flesh among the faithful. It would appear that the Jewish custom of eating fish was subsequently adapted by the Christians, who partook of a sacramental fish meal. The fish in Christian symbolism represents Jesus Christ, and in the old Roman catacombs the fish symbol appears frequently. The Greek word for fish is *ichthus* and the early Christians saw in the letters of this word a monogram summarizing their faith: Iesous CHristos, THeou Uios Soter (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour).

Certain fish of a sacred character, possessing the power of fore-knowledge and of healing, had considerable influence on the divinatory rites of Celtic peoples. At Ffynnon Beris in Wales the appearance of a trout was always considered a favourable omen, and as recently as the 18th century the movements of sacred fish or eel indicated the matrimonial prospects of young girls at Ffynnon Ddwynwen in Anglesey, where an old woman was always present to interpret the oracle.

The Mighty Kraken

Some fish had the power to heal the sick from contact with their divinely 'charged' bodies. To this day, tench applied to the soles of the feet are used for the treatment of yellow jaundice in peasant Ireland; the tench also has the reputation for healing other fish, being known as the 'physician of fishes'.

Even more remarkable were nautical freaks, the monstrous squids, sea serpents, and the mighty kraken of the northern waters, described by Erik Pontoppidan in his *Natural History of Norway* (1752-53) as 'the largest and most surprising of all the animal creation'. The kraken was said to be about a mile and a half in circumference and so vast as to be frequently mistaken for an island, yet fishermen were often kindly disposed towards it, for its presence at the bottom of the sea was thought to drive shoals of fish into their nets. According to one legend, which would appear to link the kraken with the great cosmic fish of antiquity, only two of these fish existed and these were created at the beginning of the world and would die at the world's end.

The sea monk of Norway, described by Guillaume Rondelet in his *Books of Sea Fishes* in 1544, was a grotesque creature which derived its name from its monk-like cowl and tonsured head. The Chinese sea monk raised storms and attacked and capsized junks and was the terror of the Eastern seas.

The inclusion of the fish in the totemic systems of many peoples from Alaska to Africa has led to corresponding taboos. A Polynesian would not eat eel or shark if it happened to be his own individual totem. Anthropologist Margaret Mead reported how certain brightly coloured fish were taboo until they had water poured over them; then they could be safely presented to the tribal chiefs. In Serbia fish is taboo for a pregnant woman; the Tasmanians rejected fish with scales, and the Bantu reject fish absolutely. On the banks of the Seine the John Dory is taboo and in Co. Sligo in Ireland it is the skate. The monk fish, if caught, was always nailed to the masthead, for its presence aboard, like that of priests and clergymen, was believed to bring disaster.

Fish have provided the theme of many legends. Innumerable are the tales of fishes that return lost rings, perhaps the best known being that of the ring recovered from the body of a salmon, as recorded in the life of St Kentigern, patron saint of Glasgow. This miraculous fish found further immortality by being incorporated in the arms of the city. In the Chinese versions of the Cinderella story a girl receives help from a fish, and in the legend of the cathedral of St Pol de Léon in Finistère a fish brought a bell to the Ile de Batz from England in the 6th century. There are other curious legends of human souls imprisoned within the bodies of fish and of fabulous rewards being offered to fishermen for their liberation.

Some of the most surprising beliefs still form part of the contemporary lore of fishermen. Even the most prosaic of anglers can be victim of the superstition that a fish returned to the water will convey a warning of danger to its fellows. American anglers share this and other fishermen's superstitions: that an offering should be made, perhaps a coin put into the water; that fishing is best in a south or a west wind; that changing poles is unlucky, as is talking of how many fish you have caught.

Creature with Principles

Generally speaking, the fish has been thought of as on the side of the angels, although there is a solitary incident in the annals of English witchcraft in which a fish played the part of a familiar spirit, in Leicester in 1616. There seems to be a universal belief that fish are endowed with a kind of pre-knowledge, and also that they have an instinctive moral sense. Thus, blood shed by human beings in anger has been known to result in fish deserting a particular fishing ground.

Most fish superstitions contain vestiges of ancient modes of thought. One of the most interesting of these relates to the system of correspondences (see CORRESPONDENCES), in the belief that every land creature has its marine counterpart. Well-known examples are the sea horse and the sea cow, while the swordfish, which really exists, was the opposite number of the mythical unicorn. A suggestion of spontaneous generation appears in the superstition that the eel springs to life from river mud or from a horse's hair in water, and of sun worship in the belief that it cannot die until sundown.

A considerable body of mythological lore survives in the British Isles in connection with that once staple article of diet, the herring. According to an article in the journal *Folklore*, it was a Yorkshire fisherman's belief that the herring evolved from the sea anemone. More common was the belief in the Royal Herring, the monster leader of the shoal on sea journeyings, a creature so sacred that fishermen refused either to catch or harm it. Herrings eaten raw were reported to bring visions of a future bride to Tyneside bachelors. Optimistic sea fishermen had the custom of wrapping inedible portions of herring in a piece of paper before discarding them, in the hope that the bones would knit together again and that the reconstituted herring would then summon its fellows from out of the sea.

Misinformation marches hand in hand with mythology in the lore of individual fishes: the shark is aware of forthcoming death at sea and follows the ship in anticipation of a meal; the skate loves music and can be caught by playing the fiddle. Crustacea and other forms of marine life possess their own individual mythologies. In Tahiti the sea-hermit crab is a god and if eaten without the proper rites can cause death; the shadows of the gods also take the form of crabs.

Harvest of the Sea

As with agriculture on land, the opening of the fishing season is accompanied by special rites, including blessing the boats and sometimes laying salt in the nets to placate the water spirits. In the Caroline archipelago in the Pacific there is ceremonial chanting followed by an obligatory silence; if this silence is not observed, the season will be a failure. Indeed success in fishing must never be mentioned as this constitutes a form of arrogance that is highly objectionable to spirits. Greediness among fishermen is always unlucky. One must never fish every day, as this might be construed as an expression of dissatisfaction with the bounty of the gods.

Inevitably the fish harvest is an occasion for thanksgiving ceremonies, a curious example being the mimetic dance of the Yuchi Indians of North America suggestive of the movements of a fish. More sophisticated are the various modern festivals like the 'harvest of the sea' services at Brixham in Devon, when the churches are decorated with fishing gear and offerings of the catch.

Aids to Love

Preaching to the fish takes place in certain American Indian tribes, based upon the assumption that fish are more likely to submit to a friendly than an unfriendly group. The preacher, it is said, must utter his words 'in full voice' to be effective. In Scotland at one time fishermen would make pretence to hurl a fellow fisherman into the loch and then haul him out as if he were a fish, so as to provide a clear hint to the fish of precisely what was expected of them.

On this 19th century silver sword guard from Japan, Kwannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy, is shown standing on the back of a black carp; in Japan the carp was a symbol of strength and virility

Michael Holford/Sotheby's

Certain fish are luck-bringers, a well-known example being the fiddle fish, which is never eaten but instead towed behind the fishing boat until it falls to pieces. Even the eating of fish has its appropriate ritual. Mackerel, herring and pilchard must always be eaten from tail to head, never the reverse way or the main school of fish in the sea will turn tail and desert the fishing waters for the open sea. American belief says that goldfish are lucky, and that whooping cough can be cured by swallowing a live fish.

Fish as prolific breeders could hardly escape becoming sex symbols and as such they were incorporated in the monuments of the ancients. Symbolically the fish represents the male principle in an active state, while the head alone symbolizes the female. (Freud also conceived the fish to be the symbol of the male organ.) Fish have therefore been thought to influence the sexual activities of both men and women. To eat certain fish in Greenland led to pregnancy in either sex, and in Java the husband of a childless woman who ate fish from 'the Children's Sea' was likely to have offspring. It is quite common to prescribe fish for women during pregnancy, and virgins in Brazil, India and Samoa are said to have been fertilized by presents of fish.

Such aphrodisiacs as oysters and the sepia octopus were favourites in classical times. The book of Tobit, written in the 2nd century BC, describes how the burning of a fish drove away a demon that impeded love. It is not surprising therefore to learn that in medieval love rites fish were often burned rather than eaten, since the acrid smell of burning fish could be calculated to drive away the demonic enemies of love.

The presence of phosphorus in fish is said to have been responsible for the choice of this form of food as an aphrodisiac. More surprising is the widely held belief that fish as a food is good for the brains, a superstition which possibly arose from the fact that the monks, the educated class of an earlier age, ate large quantities of fish. Or perhaps it arose from the half-understood fact that phosphorus is a prominent constituent of human nerve and brain cells. (See also DOLPHIN; KRAKEN; PISCES; SALMON; SEAL; TROUT; WHALE.)

ERIC MAPLE

The Almighty Fin

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear.
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow,
Good Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry.
Mud unto mud!—Death eddies near—
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,
In wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth
One Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
And under that Almighty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in.
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

Rupert Brooke *Heaven*

'Spare the rod and spoil the child,' warned King Solomon, while an 11th century cardinal reckoned that 1000 self-inflicted lashes were the spiritual equivalent of ten penitential psalms. But flagellation is also a means of gratifying both sexual and sadistic impulses

FLAGELLATION

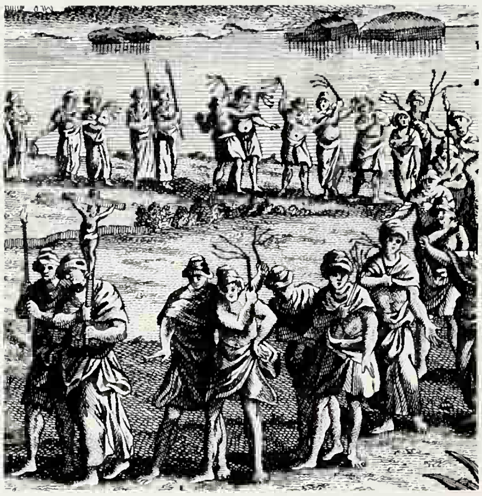
HEALTH SEEKERS who have indulged in the popular sauna bath know that the process traditionally ends with a light scourging of the naked skin by means of birch twigs. Devotees of the sauna reject imputations of sexual deviation, claiming that this mild birching is intended to stimulate the circulation, not the libido. And certainly flagellation – ritualized whipping, mostly engaged in voluntarily – has long been considered a healthful and curative practice. The ancient Romans, who were also great bathers, saw whipping as a cure for several diseases: Seneca used it for fevers, others for rheumatism. (Whips were used on the latter disease by many primitive tribes, too, such as the Hopi of Arizona.) The Romans turned to the whip to cure barrenness in women; practically every culture from Greece to Victorian England, and later, used it to cure incontinence in boys.

But then whipping has long been thought to cure boys of almost everything that needed curing, and some 20th century British boarding schools have not let the tradition die – a practice responsible, it is said, for what is known picturesquely in Europe as the 'English vice'. Most ailments of character or psychological makeup have been 'treated' at one time or another by flogging: Dr Christian Paullini, the 17th century German author of *Flagellum Salutis*, is only one of a long line who recommend flagellation to cure schoolboys of idleness, women of shrewishness, thieves of criminal behaviour.

In such cases the whip is laid on partly in punishment but mostly to rectify personality flaws. It sets out to cure by ritual purification, to drive out evil from the recipient's body and mind. We may no longer believe that illness is caused by evil spirits or demonic possession; but some of our therapeutic techniques derive directly from this attitude. In the history of flagellation, this purificatory aspect has far more importance than another main ritual use of the whip in the ordeal or test of endurance.

Many primitive peoples use whipping as a means of testing fortitude, usually in puberty rites or other initiation ceremonies. Such pain rituals can be found in the initiations of the fierce warrior tribes of American Plains Indians; and the late Gerald Gardner, who made much of the pagan background of the modern witchcraft movement, was anxious to imply that whipping once formed a part of initiation into that ancient sect. But the ordeal side of flagellation seems minor in the face of the fantastic life span of the purificatory, penitential, or 'therapeutic' uses of the whip.

Wherever a devout individual or community has perceived evil needing to be driven out, the whip has made its appearance. Many societies cleansed their community by the use of a scapegoat, on to which all the evil afflicting them was laid before it was killed – often by beating it to death. The Bible (apart from Solomon's adjuration in the Proverbs not to spare the rod) clearly pictures the Messiah in this way, in the book of Isaiah: 'he was bruised for our iniquities . . . with his stripes we are healed.' The tradition of exorcism – the driving out of evil spirits from houses or bodies – is full of tales of flagellation (see EXORCISM).



The ancient Greek cult of the Spartans held an annual purifying Feast of Flagellation; and early Christian monasteries resounded with the crack of the lash, but far more frequently. An 11th century cardinal reckoned that 1000 self-inflicted lashes were the spiritual equivalent of ten penitential psalms. The early Franciscans turned also to the whip. The object was mortification of the flesh and repression of any unchristian fleshly urges.

Out of this spirit of purification and penance came also that weird phenomenon the Brotherhood of the Flagellants – never a real religious order, never recognized by the Church, but immensely widespread in 14th century Europe. Perugia, in central Italy, saw the beginning of mass flagellation in public in the 13th century; in the next century the practice took on new strength and spread like the plague that coincided with it.

But the Flagellants did not turn to the whip because of the Black Death; they were active, especially in Germany, before the plague had reached that far. Certainly though, the pestilence gave them their justification for bloodthirsty penance, and brought thousands of converts after 1349, the year of the plague. The Flagellants massed in public, vast crowds of partly naked men and women, lashing themselves and each other twice daily for 33 days, with devices ranging from little cords to leather thongs knotted and holding metal points, for the more extensive penitential spilling of blood.

The Flagellant cult went to the New World with the conquistadores, giving rise to the movement called Los Hermanos Penitentes – still thriving, still self-flagellating with whips of cholla cactus in parts of New Mexico and southern Colorado. Their whips fly most during Holy Week, but also during the initiation of new brothers, the only time a brother is lashed by anyone but himself. It is a feast of pain when few initiates retain consciousness throughout the ceremony.

The Flagellants and their fellows used the whip to punish the sins inherent in the flesh and to scourge evil from the spirit. But this ecstatic flagellation has a positive side also: it becomes a means of achieving a higher plane of consciousness, a more exalted state of being, through pain. The ordeal, too, aims to produce an exalted state: the initiate is not only being tested for endurance and courage, but is being directly infused with some higher power to fit him for his new role in the community or the secret society. The aspiration to a higher plane is also offered as the reason for the orgiastic aspects, including flagellation, of the various cults of evil that have proliferated in past centuries and apparently still thrive today.

Mention of the sexual deviation known as sado-masochism stirs up powerful emotional reactions. Undoubtedly many of the people claiming today to be practising Devil worshippers or black magicians may well be using the traditions of evil as a smokescreen behind which they are performing the usual antics of the sex orgy, deviant or otherwise. They can be said to be involved with orgies for orgies' sake, disguised as satanism.

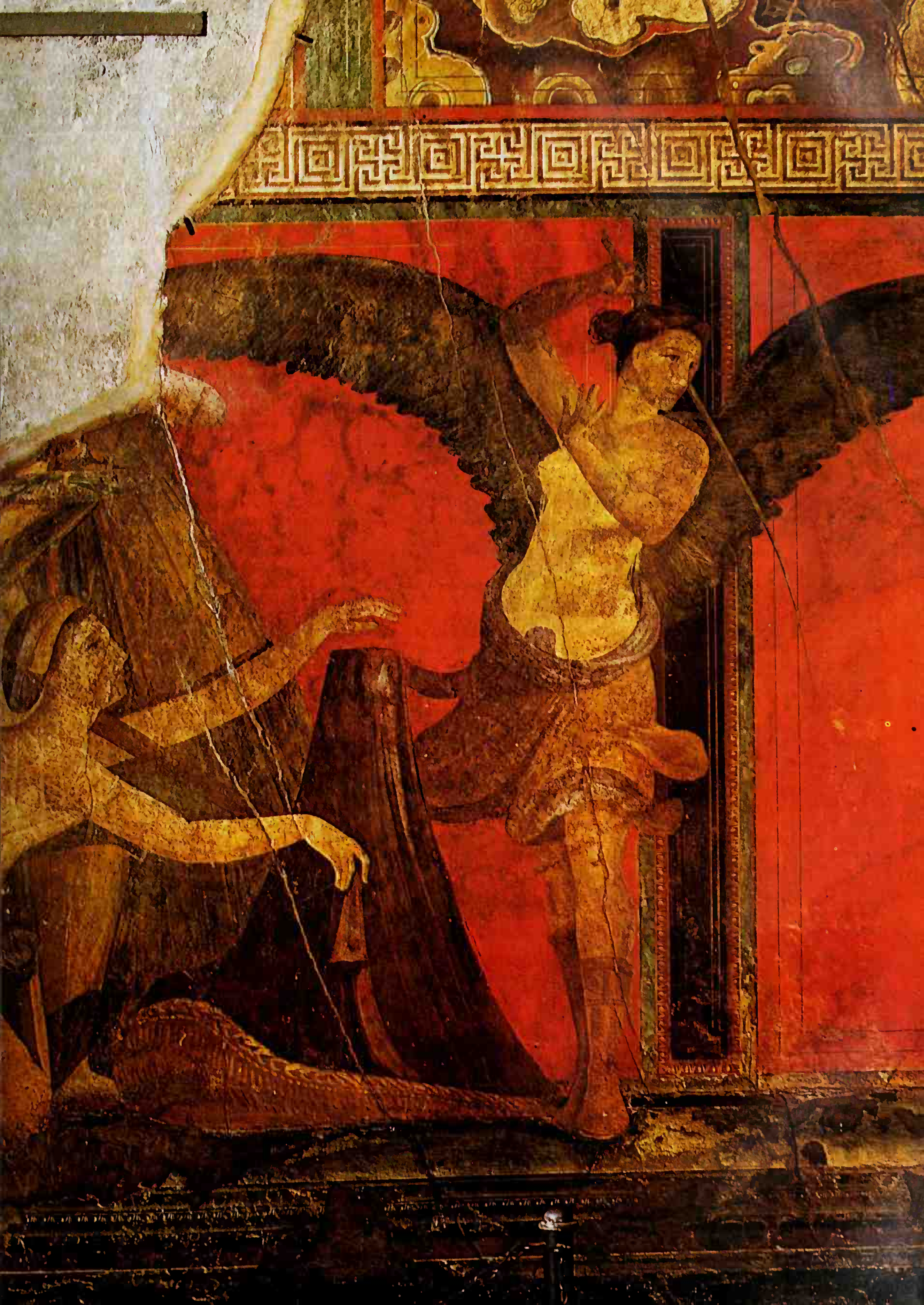
A Perverted Pleasure

But it may be that, whatever the intention of the flagellant, sado-masochistic sexual pleasure is the root cause of the practice, in all its forms. Sadism and masochism were well documented long before de Sade or Sacher-Masoch, and modern sexology has dwelt upon them extensively. Fascination with the subject has become so widespread that one finds it nearly everywhere, certainly in a great many books, plays and films. One can hardly be blamed, then, for finding this sexual deviation in every manifestation of ritualized flagellation: not just in the overt 'whipping sessions' in brothels, but in a subliminal form in the self-mortification of saintly ascetics, whether Indian fakirs or Christian fathers.

So one considers every proponent of birch and rod – schoolmaster, politician, clergyman, saint – guilty of the perversion of sadomasochism until he or she is proved innocent. Modern horror stories involving flagellation underline the need for such proof. There was a horrifying case in 1968 when a young girl, a member of an 'ascetic' religious sect in Switzerland, died following a fearful series of 'purificatory' beatings. Brutality to others performed in the name of spiritual or mystic ecstasy remains brutality; perhaps only the self-flagellants deserve, if not respect, at least a sympathetic hearing.

DOUGLAS HILL

Above **In the Middle Ages long lines of flagellants travelled across Europe** ***Right*** **A female figure with dark wings wields the lash as part of the initiation of a young woman into the ecstatic cult of Dionysus: fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries outside Pompeii**



The preservation of the chosen few and the destruction by flood of the rest of humanity – often as a punishment for sin – is a theme which occurs in legend in many parts of the world

FLOOD

THE TRADITIONS of many widely separated peoples include legends of a great flood which, at some time in the remote past, overwhelmed vast tracts of land and flourishing cities, and drowned all or nearly all the inhabitants, men and beasts alike. In the more ancient forms of the legend, it is often the whole world that is inundated. One man only, with his family and, usually, a number of animals, manages to escape because, being supernaturally warned of the coming disaster, he is able either to build or acquire a ship that carries him safely through the deluge. Eventually, after a period varying in different traditions from a few days to several months, the anger of the gods is appeased, the floods recede and the dry land reappears. Life is preserved in the midst of universal destruction, and in due course the world is filled again by the decendants of the hero and of the animals that sailed with him.

The most widely known, though not the oldest, of all these ancient tales is that contained in the book of Genesis (chapters 6–9). In it is related how, when ten generations had passed since the time of Adam, Yahweh saw that the world he had created had become corrupt and full of wickedness. He resolved to drown all mankind and everything else that had life in one vast flood, with the exception of Noah, who was a righteous man and worthy to become the ancestor of a new race of human beings in a regenerated world. He commanded Noah to build an ark of gopher wood, giving him directions as to its size and design, and bade him go into it when it was finished, taking with him all his family and male and female creatures of every species known on earth – clean beasts by sevens and unclean beasts by twos.

Noah did as he was told, and Yahweh loosed the deluge. Rain fell without stopping for 40 days and nights, the water rose until even the tops of the mountains were covered, and the ark floated upon it. Every living being perished, except those that were with Noah. After a long time the floods began to subside. The ark came to rest on Mount Ararat in Armenia, and Noah sent out a raven, and then a dove, to discover how far the waters had abated. The raven flew away over the drowned land but the dove, finding no resting place outside, returned to the ark. Again, after seven days, it was sent out and again it came back, but this time it had an olive leaf in its beak. Finally, after a third flight, it did not return and Noah, looking forth, saw that the land was dry. He came out from the ark and built an altar on the mountain, and offered a sacrifice in gratitude for his deliverance. Then Yahweh made a covenant with him, promising that his descendants should multiply and fill the earth, and that never again should the whole world be destroyed by water.

The Original Noah

The Mesopotamian flood legend, from which the Genesis story is clearly derived, is far older. Abraham's people must have known it when they lived in their Chaldean homeland, and probably they carried it with them when they migrated to the land of Canaan. There are several known versions. One was incorporated by a Babylonian named Berosus in a history of his own country written in Greek in the 3rd century BC. According to Berosus's account, the god Cronus appeared to Xisuthros, tenth king of Babylon, in a dream and warned him that there would be a great flood which would destroy the human race. Xisuthros would be saved if he would obey the god's commands which were that, first, he must write a history of the world from its beginnings and bury it in the city of Sippara, and then he must build a ship and fill it with living creatures, men and birds and four-footed beasts.

Xisuthros accordingly buried his history at Sippara and constructed a stout vessel, five furlongs in length and two furlongs broad, on to which he took his family and friends and an unspecified number of animals and birds. The flood came as had been foretold and only those on the ship survived it. When the water began to go down, the vessel was stranded on a hilltop. Like Noah, Xisuthros sent out birds, and when the last of these did not come back, he disembarked with his wife and his daughter and his helmsman to build an altar and offer sacrifice. The other human passengers remained on board, and when their leader did not return they became anxious and went in search of him. They could not find him but presently they heard his voice speaking to them from the air, though he himself was invisible. He told them that he and his three companions had all been taken from this world to dwell with the gods. He went on to say that the mountain on which his hearers stood was in Armenia, and that they must make their way thence to Babylon, and dig up the writings that had been buried at Sippara. This they did, and by them and their descendants many cities were built, ancient sanctuaries restored and all the land repeopled.

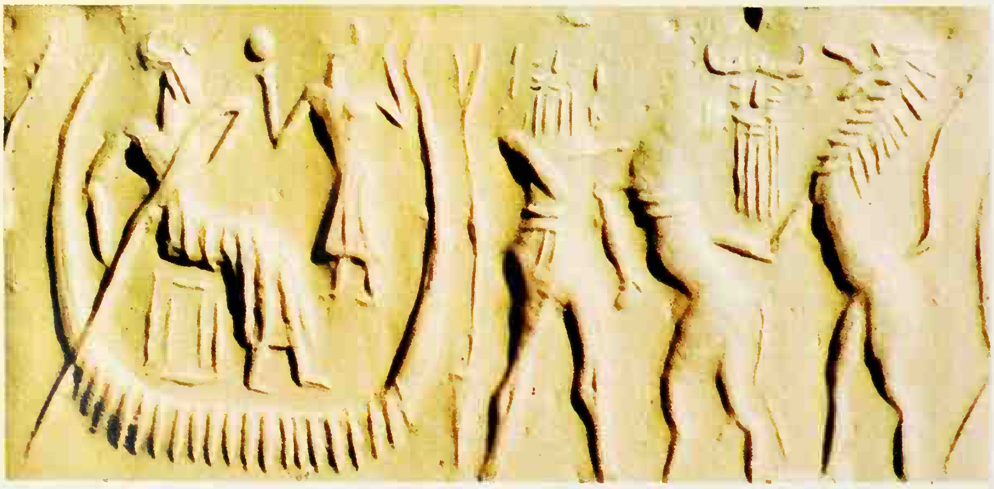
An earlier and more interesting variant of the same story forms part of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which concerns the doings of Gilgamesh, king of Erech. He was not personally involved in the deluge, which took place long before his time, but he heard about it from his immortal ancestor, Utnapishtim.

Long ago, he said, when he lived in the city of Shuruppak on the banks of the Euphrates, the gods sat in council and decided to send a flood whereby all men would be drowned. Ea, Lord of Waters and of Wisdom, was present at this council and contrived, by a subterfuge, to warn Utnapishtim of what was about to happen. Instead of speaking to him directly, as Yahweh did to Noah, he addressed the wall, saying, 'O reed hut, reed hut, O wall, wall, O reed hut hearken, O wall attend,' and so conveyed his message without actually revealing the secrets of his fellow gods to a lesser being. He bade him build a ship, well-planned and strong, in which he could save himself and his family. He was to tell no one of the threatened deluge, and if anyone asked him why he was building a ship, he was to reply that he had incurred the wrath of the great god, Enlil, and must therefore seek refuge with Ea upon the ocean.

Even the Gods Were Afraid

Utnapishtim made a barge of wood, caulked with pitch within and bitumen without, and set on it a house of six storeys, each storey having nine rooms. Into it he brought his kinsfolk and his handicraftsmen, his cattle and other beasts of the field, and all that he had of living seed and of gold and silver. When the appointed time came, he went in and shut the door. Then the winds blew and the rain fell in torrents, the waters rose and whirlwinds rushed over them, and there was no light anywhere. For six days and nights the tempest raged, and so terrible was it that even the gods were afraid. They drew back, they cowered by the wall, they climbed up into the heaven of Anu for safety; and all but Enlil repented that they had unleashed such destruction.

On the seventh day the storm ceased, the turbulent waters became calm, silence succeeded uproar; but when Utnapishtim looked out he saw nothing but desolation and death. As the flood slowly receded, the



Michael Holford

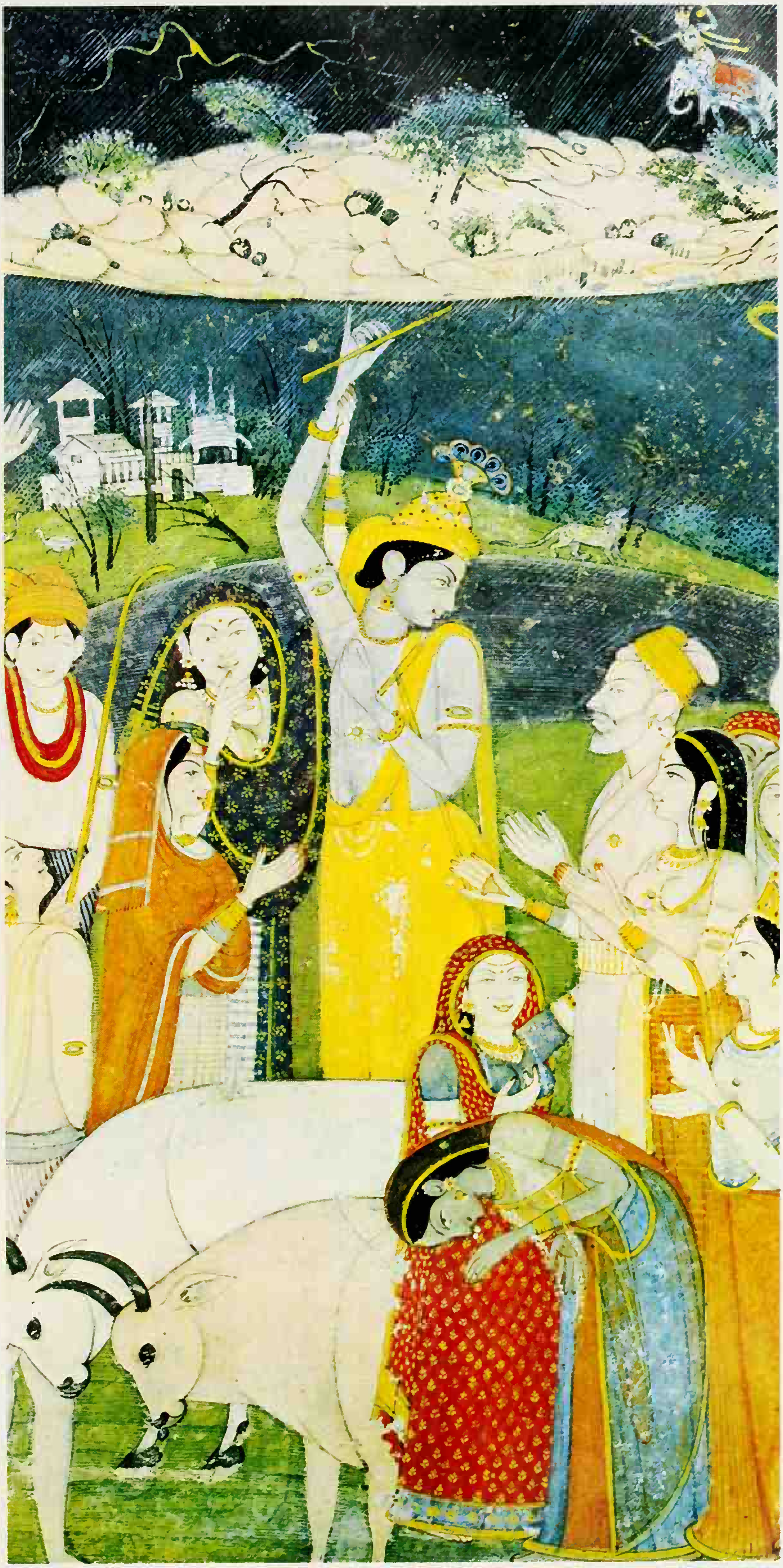
illtops reappeared and the ship grounded n Mount Nisir. Utnapishtim opened a vindow and loosed a dove, and after an nterval, a swallow. Both returned because hey could find no dry land, but when a aven was released, it found food to eat and round on which to alight and it did not eturn. Then Utnapishtim knew that the vater was going down and he came out of the hip, with all his companions, and offered a acrifice on the mountaintop.

The gods smelt the sweet savour of the ffering and gathered round it with delight. nly Enlil was angry when he saw that ome human beings had survived, for he still esired the end of mankind. Ea was sus- ected of having betrayed the secret counsels f the gods, which indeed he had, though in uch a way that he was able to deny the harge. He reproached Enlil because it was e who had wished for the deluge. Let it be nough, he said, to diminish the tribes of en by sending a lion, or a leopard, or a amine, or a plague, but let them not all erish together in a flood. Then Enlil elented, and taking Utnapishtim and his vife by the hand, he blessed them and romised that henceforth they should be ike gods and live for ever.

The oldest known version of this story is hat inscribed upon a tablet unearthed uring excavations at Nippur, an ancient ity of southern Sumer. It was written, pparently about 2100 BC, in the language f the Sumerians, the ancient people who lourished in Mesopotamia before they were onquered by the invading Semites. The ero in this legend was named Ziusudra. He vas a king and also a priest of Enki, the od who, in the Sumerian pantheon, corres- onded to the Semitic Ea. When Enlil alled upon the assembled gods to destroy he world by a rainstorm, Enki warned his aithful servant. Like Ea, he did so by ndirect means, bidding his priest to stand utside a wall and listen to a message ddressed to that wall. Ziusudra built a hip, though because the tablet is broken at hat point in the narrative, exactly how he uilt it and who sailed with him is not nown. Then the winds and the rain raged ogether for seven days and nights, and the lood waters covered the earth. When they ad at last abated, Ziusudra offered sacrifice nd prostrated himself before Anu and efore Enlil. In this version, Enlil's wrath vas more quickly appeased than in the Gilgamesh story, and he bestowed upon Ziusudra both immortality and the title of Preserver of the Seed of Mankind.

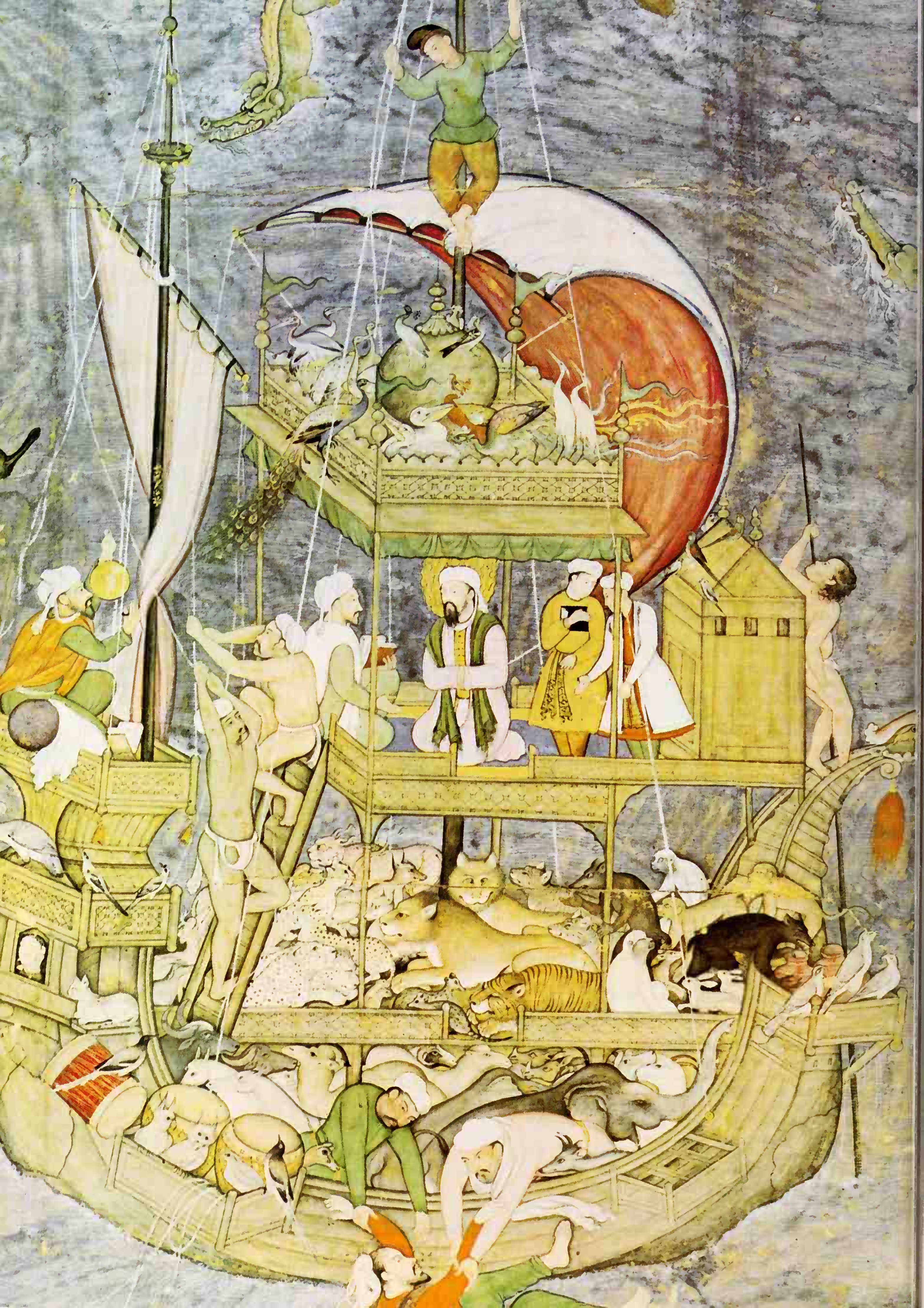
The deluge is also mentioned in the

ar left **A Sumerian boat with passenger and oatman appears on the left of a cylinder seal f the third millennium BC: the Sumerian egend of a great flood strongly influenced he Jewish story of Noah**



ight **Indra, Hindu god of the heavens mounted on the elephant Airavata), grew ealous of the worship given to Krishna nd poured down rain to destroy mankind; ut Krishna kept off the floods by holding p the hill Govardhana on his little inger for seven days like a canopy: 18th–19th entury Indian painting**

Freer Gallery Washington



Sumerian king lists wherein are enumerated their rulers from the country's first beginnings. After some early kings have been listed it is stated: 'Then came the Flood. And after the Flood, kingship again descended from heaven.' Archeologists of the 20th century have proved that the historians of those far-off days were right in supposing that their land had once been devastated by a catastrophic flood. In 1929, during his excavations at Ur, Sir Leonard Woolley found clear evidence of a widespread inundation, greater in extent and magnitude than anything subsequently known in the region, which had occurred about 3000 BC. It had been vast enough to cover practically the whole of Lower Mesopotamia and drown most of its inhabitants. For the few who survived, it must have been the end of the world they knew, even if it was not that of the entire earth, as the legend gives it.

Flood traditions are very widespread, though they do not exist everywhere. They are found in India, Burma and elsewhere in southern Asia, in Australia and New Zealand, New Guinea and the scattered islands of the Pacific, in North and South America, Mexico and in some European regions. Most of these stories resemble each other in general pattern, as records of a worldwide inundation sent by the gods, from which only one divinely favoured hero and his companions escaped, but they vary, naturally, in their details. India has several versions, of which the earliest known is preserved in an ancient treatise, the *Satapatha Brahmana*. In this it is related that the hero, Manu, was first warned and then helped by a fish. He alone survived the flood. When it was all over, the world was empty, but because he desired children, he practised austerities and offered in sacrifice butter, sour milk, and curds and whey. Out of these substances a woman was miraculously created and from the union sprang a new race of human beings – the race of Manu.

Deucalion and Pyrrha

Similarly, in the early form of a Greek flood legend, as told by Pindar in the 5th century BC, every living creature was destroyed, with the exception of Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha. These two weathered the storm for nine days and nights in an ark which Deucalion had constructed, and which finally came to rest on Mount Parnassus. When the floods had ceased they came down from the mountain and, at the bidding of Zeus, they too created mankind anew, by throwing stones over their own heads. As they struck the ground, the stones thrown by Deucalion became men and those thrown by Pyrrha became women. In this tale it is not recorded how the animals were preserved or re-created, but in a later version, which more closely resembles the Babylonian story and may have been influenced by it, Deucalion is said to have taken into the ark with him two of every kind of land animal, both the harmless and the dangerous, and these, by the power of the gods, lived together in harmony.

There was also a Greek tradition that Deucalion's flood was not the only great inundation in the history of the world. There had been two others, one before it in the time of Ogyges, king of Thebes, and one after it, when Dardanus was driven from his homeland by a sudden and terrible, but apparently not a worldwide, flood. He escaped upon a raft, or according to another version upon an inflated skin, and drifting to Mount Ida, he landed there and in due course became the founder of the city of Troy.

Most North American Indian tribes have some myth or folktale about a deluge, often with extremely odd causes, such as the tears of a deserted superhuman husband, or water from the punctured belly of some vast monster. Mankind is often saved by a warning from a culture hero; for instance, Dog warns a man to build a raft, in Creek mythology. Many Indians, especially western tribes, held to the belief that everything was once underwater, until the hero, usually called Earth Diver, brought up some soil from beneath the water and so caused the origin of the earth.

In his *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, Sir J. G. Frazer has pointed out that the mythologies of Africa and of northern and central Asia contain no stories of a universal deluge, and this appears to be true of western Europe also. With the coming of Christianity, the biblical flood legend was, of course, accepted as divinely revealed truth, and continued to be so accepted for many centuries afterwards, but it does not seem to have superseded any pre-Christian west European myth of the same type. There are, however, several well-known traditions of partial and local floods caused, not by rain storms, but by land subsidence and violent encroachments of the sea.

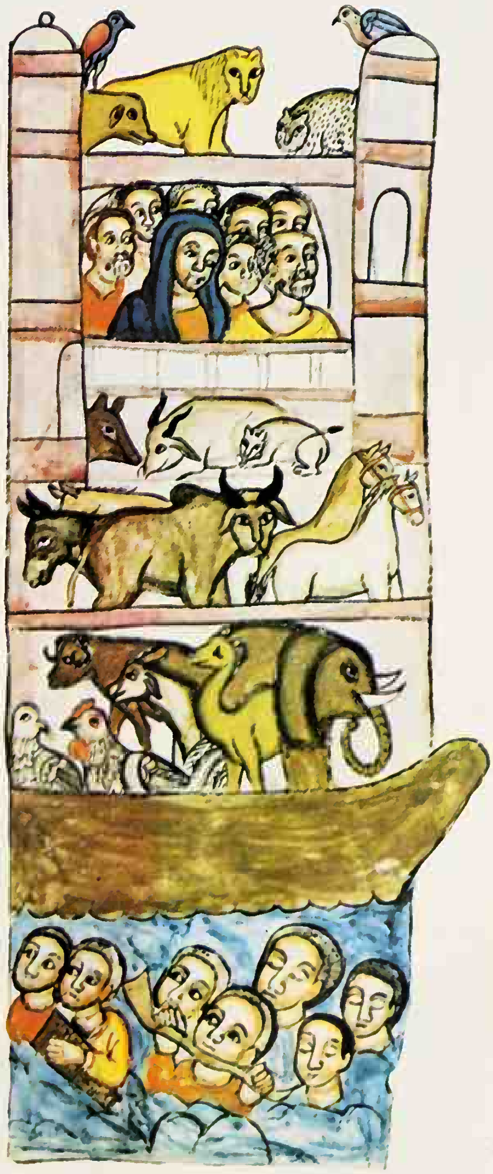
Tales of Cities in the Sea

One of these stories is the Welsh legend of the Lowland Hundred. This was a tract of land lying westward of the present west coast of Wales, submerged now under the waters of Cardigan Bay. According to the most familiar variant of the tradition, it was a fertile and prosperous territory, 40 miles long and 20 miles broad, which stretched from Bardsey Island to the River Teifi. It was low-lying and was defended from the sea's encroachments by a system of embankments and sluices. It contained 16 noble cities, of which the chief was called Caer Gwyddno. The site of this vanished town was commonly supposed to be marked by a collection of large underwater boulders at the far end of Sarn Cynfelin, a rocky ridge running some seven or eight miles out to sea. This ridge, and two others like it, are natural formations, but in popular belief they were until fairly recently held to be either man-made causeways or parts of the defensive embankments.

The legend relates that in the early years of the 6th century AD, Gwyddno Garanhir was Lord of the Lowland Hundred, and Seithennin, son of the king of Syved, was keeper of its embankments. One night, when a great feast was held, the latter became exceedingly drunk and either through simple carelessness or as a drunken prank he left the sluices open.

In consequence the sea broke through the defences and in a very short time overwhelmed the whole territory. Only a few people managed to escape, including Gwyddno Garanhir, his son Elphin and Seithennin himself.

Another still more dramatic Welsh story – or perhaps a localized variant of the same story – is told of the lost land of Tyno Helig. This was a little kingdom, or chief's territory, which once extended northwards from the Carnarvonshire coast and is now sunk in Conway Bay. Over it, at some rather uncertain period between the 5th and the 7th centuries AD, Helig ap Glannawg is said to have reigned, and to have lived in a palace which bore the name of Llys Helig. Tradition said that this palace was situated some two miles out to sea from the present coastline, and that occasionally, when the tide



British Museum

Opposite The story of Noah receives a Moslem interpretation in this 16th century Mogul miniature; the best known of the many flood legends of the world, it has had a great appeal to popular imagination **Right** Noah's ark sails past as the rest of humanity drown: detail from an 18th century Ethiopian manuscript was unusually low, some ruined parts of it could be seen under the water. However, in 1939 F. J. North destroyed this interesting tradition by proving that the 'ruins' were in fact an accumulation of Iron Age boulders.

The catastrophe which destroyed Tyno Helig was popularly supposed to have been caused by the sins of the ruling family, and to have been prophesied by a disembodied voice four generations before it occurred. In one version of the tale, it was the crimes of Helig himself, or of his ancestors, that called down retribution upon the land, though he and his sons saved themselves by swift flight and thereafter led godly lives. In another, it was his daughter and her lover who were responsible. The daughter loved a man of low degree, but she would not marry him because he did not possess that sign of rank, a gold torque. To obtain one, he murdered a nobleman. As he was burying the corpse, he heard a voice crying, 'Vengeance will come!' He fled from that place, but when he told the girl what had happened, she sent him back to find out how soon the vengeance would come. The voice replied, 'In the time of the children, and of the grandchildren, and of the great-grandchildren, and of the great-great-grandchildren.' On hearing this, Helig's daughter said there was nothing to fear, for she and her lover would be dead by then.

They were married and lived to see their own great-great-grandchildren. One day, a great feast was held at Llys Helig, at which their kin of all four generations were present. A maidservant was sent to fetch more wine from the cellar, and found it half-full of water, with fish swimming about in it. She ran back to the hall and told the bard who, according to one variant, was the only person sufficiently sober to appreciate the danger. He, recognizing that the long-prophesied doom had come at last, fled at once, taking the maid with him. These two were the only survivors, for immediately after their flight the sea rushed in and all the land of Tyno Helig was drowned.

Lost Lyonnesse

Farther south, in Cornwall, we find the tradition of lost Lyonnesse. This legend is perhaps better known than any other British tradition of the same type because, in the course of time, it became involved with the Arthurian romances and the story of Tristan. Lyonnesse, which in Cornish was called Lethowstow, lay between Land's End and the Scilly Isles. Like Lowland Hundred, it was fertile and prosperous, with many flourishing villages and no less than 140 churches. There was also at least one great city, the site of which was said to be marked by the rocks now called the Seven Stones, lying some seven miles westward of Land's End. This place is still sometimes named 'the Town' and William Camden, in the 16th century, remarked that fishermen had been known to drag up windows and other traces of buildings there with hooks.

This land sank like the others, though here there is no tradition of sin or drunkenness to account for the disaster. The sea must have been encroaching alarmingly for some time before the final calamity, for the legend states that one man, the ancestor of the Trevilion family, took fright at its daily inroads, and sent his wife and family into Cornwall for safety. No one else apparently realized the danger, and Trevilion himself escaped only at the last moment, riding on a swift horse towards the higher ground of the Cornish mainland and reaching it only just in time. Every other dweller in Lyonnesse was drowned.

Legends Based On Fact

In western Brittany there is a more elaborate form of this legend which concerns the destruction of the city of Ker-Is. This city once flourished amid fertile lands that are now under the sea. Its site is usually given as in the Bay of Douarnenez, but in some versions of the tale it is said to be submerged off other parts of the Breton coast. It was protected from the sea by a strong dyke and by sluice gates, but it perished in the end because of the wickedness of its inhabitants who, though they were Christians, had fallen into evil ways.

Like Lyonnesse and Lowland Hundred, Ker-Is was believed to have vanished at some time in the early 6th century. It is of course obvious that so late a date is impossible. There is no evidence whatever, geological or historical, for the occurrence of floods of such magnitude as recently as the 5th or 6th century AD. The detailed accounts of noble cities, Christian churches, intricate sea defences and sinful human beings with known names and pedigrees are clearly later embellishments of what was probably once a far simpler story. Yet thes ancient tales cannot be dismissed entirel as mere products of fantasy and imagination. It is a fact that the coasts of Wales England and Brittany formerly extende farther than they do now, and that subsidences were still taking place when th lands thus lost were inhabited by our forefathers of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages Traces of human habitation in regions no well below high water mark have been discovered by archeologists, such as, for example the field walls on the submerged sandflat between some of the Scilly Isles, an artefacts in Mount's Bay and round th coast of Gower. If the men who made an used these things were forced by th encroaching waters to abandon their homes they would have their own exciting tales o disaster to tell, and these, handed down fo centuries and gradually becoming mor elaborate, would become part of the traditional lore of the regions to which the firs tellers migrated.

It is true that the legends take no accoun of the slowness of geological change, or th fact that the submergence of the los territories was gradual and intermittent. I all the stories the inundations are swift an sudden. This may be partly due to th telescoping effects of time and repetitio and a sense of drama, but here too it is possible that there is an element of fact Unusually high tides and strong gale together can cause sudden local floods limited in scope but violent enough especially in low-lying areas, to do grea damage and destroy life and property in very short time, perhaps even in a single day If this happened in the past, as it must hav done more than once, it is easy to see ho the legend could grow, a few drowned hamlets becoming in retrospect populous citie and their surrounding fields an entir kingdom.

(See also GILGAMESH.)

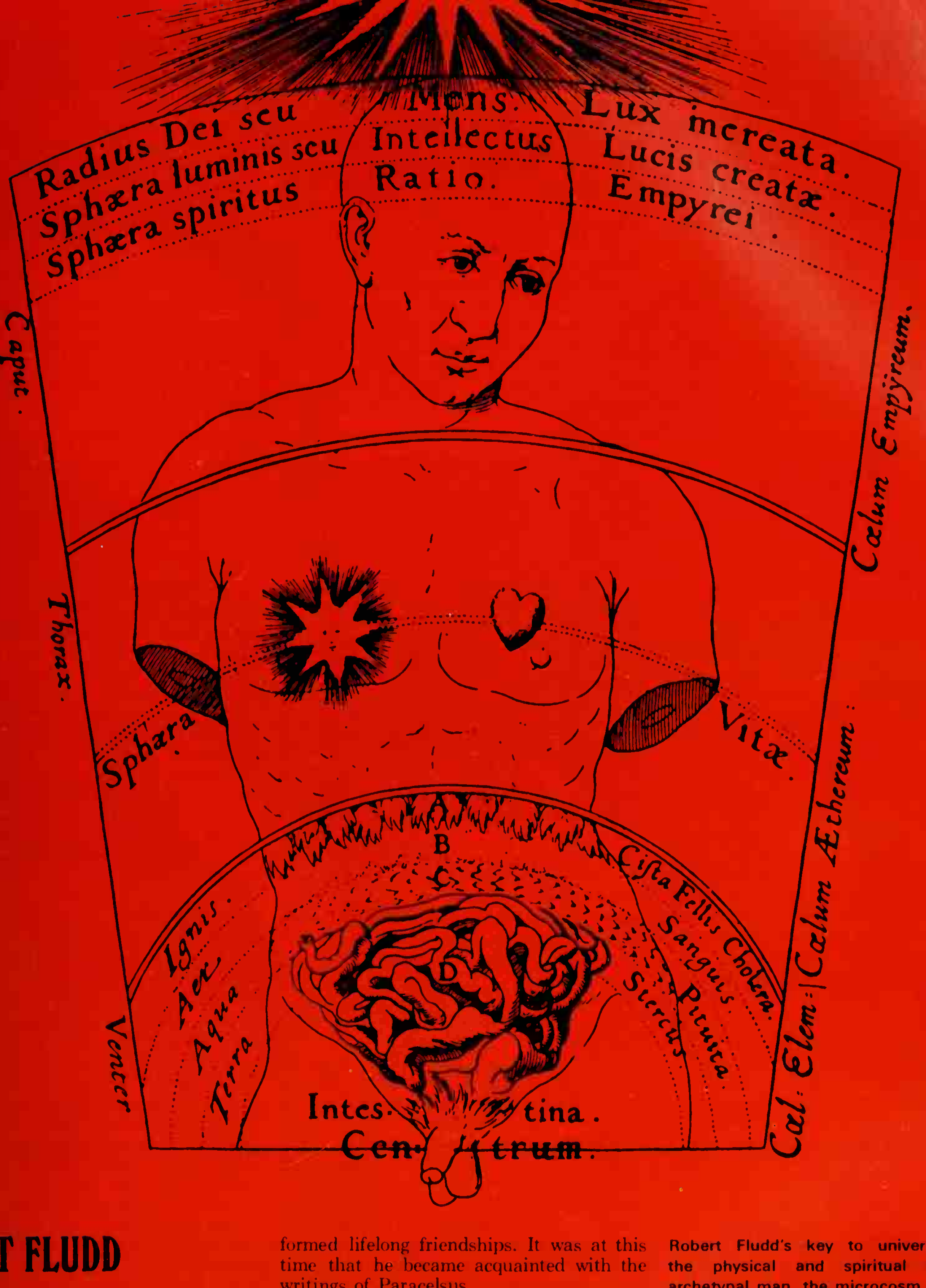
CHRISTINA HOL

FURTHER READING: J. G. Frazer, *Folk-lor in the Old Testament* (abridged edn, Macmillan, London, 1923); T. Gwynn Jones *Welsh Folklore and Folk-Customs* (Methuen London, 1930); F. J. North, *Sunken Citie* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1957); Sir Leonard Woolley, *Excavation at Ur* (Barnes & Noble, 1963).

Flowers

Subject of many legends and superstitions: real flowers on stage bring bad luck in the theatre; many flowers are unlucky if brought into the house, particularly highly scented flowers, flowers with drooping heads and white flowers; to dream of white flowers is an omen of death, while it is thought that mixed red and white flowers brought into a hospital ward will be followed by a death.

See PLANTS AND FLOWERS.


Radius Dei seu
Sphæra luminis seu
Sphæra spiritus
Mens.
Intellectus
Ratio.
Lux increata.
Lucis creatæ.
Empyrei.
Caput.
Cœlum Empyreum.
Thorax.
Sphæra
Vitæ.
Cœlum Æthereum:
A
B
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D
Ignis.
Aer
Aqua
Terra
Venter
Cista Fellis Cholera.
Sanguis.
Pituita.
Stercus
Cœl: Elem:|
Intes- tina.
Cen- trum.

Robert Fludd's key to universal anatomy; the physical and spiritual attributes of archetypal man, the microcosm, are shown to have their exact counterparts, on a larger scale, in the universe, the macrocosm

ROBERT FLUDD

AN ENGLISH PHYSICIAN and mystical philosopher, Robert Fludd was the son of Sir Thomas Fludd, paymaster to Queen Elizabeth's army in France and the Low Countries. Robert Fludd at first intended to become a soldier but abandoned this idea in favour of a life of study. Literature, philosophy, theology, medicine and especially physics, all attracted him and he was particularly fond of contemplating the marvels of Nature. To widen his knowledge he travelled on the Continent for six years, making a careful examination of everything of a rare or curious nature and seeking the company of famous scholars, with some of whom he formed lifelong friendships. It was at this time that he became acquainted with the writings of Paracelsus.

He returned home in 1605 and entered Christ Church, Oxford, where he obtained his medical degree, becoming a Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1609. He set up in practice in London where he died at the age of 63.

Fludd is one of the leading English representatives of the school of medical mystics whose principal claim was the possession of the key to universal science. During his lifetime he was famous, though success brought him many detractors who accused him of making his patients the victims of occult practices. Despite this he was very popular with the public, and respected by learned men like John Selden (1584–1654), the brilliant jurist and antiquary. Abroad his ideas were opposed by some scholars, including the French philosopher and mathematician Pierre Gassendi.

Unlike Paracelsus he made no permanent addition to the list of known drugs, nor did his researches lead to discoveries in physiology, chemistry or surgery. His works are encyclopedic in character; in them he deals with all the sciences, arts and manufactures of his times; he writes of astrology, alchemy, the art of warfare, how to make musical instruments and even offers an explanation as to the best method of crossing rivers without getting wet.

Fludd's works are indeed an odd mixture of rather curious science, book-learning and occultism. He does not deduce his ideas from facts, but acquires them through meditation or sheer erudition; yet he frequently tries to demonstrate them by means of a scientific experiment. For example, to show the identity between the divine substance and the light of the sun – an idea which he developed from the Cabala – he makes use of a kind of inverted thermometer.

He apparently discovered the Cabala while writing his *History of the Macrocosm*, in which he states that man is a miniature version (or microcosm), physically and spiritually of the universe (the macrocosm); he straightway began to demonstrate his system all over again, basing it this time on the teaching of the Rabbis, instead of the classical philosophers which until then had been his chief authorities.

Fludd's chief importance lies perhaps in his knowledge and exposition of the Cabala, though like many of his predecessors in the task he failed to extract a clear system from it. At least in his work we can find the principal ideas of cabalistic speculation on the unknowable God, on sexual cosmogony, on the correspondences between the various worlds. His other claim to be remembered is to be found in his spirited defence of the Rosicrucians in several of his treatises.

Fludd's influence is hidden rather than obvious. It is to be detected in Milton, for instance, and other poets of the 17th century. In more recent times occult writers like Madame Blavatsky owe some of thei ideas to Fludd's works and others of his time for all that these later exponents have covered them with a kind of Indian veneer.

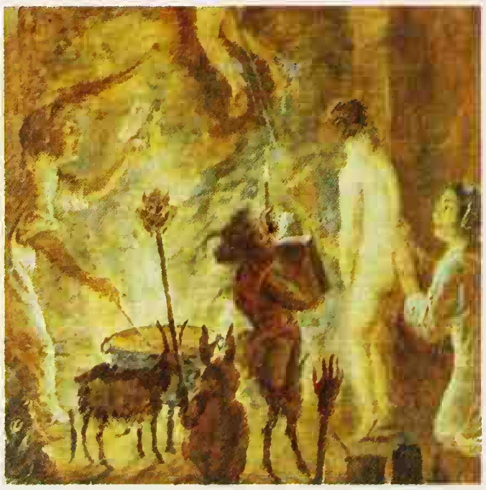
FURTHER READING: J.B. Craven, *Doctor Robert Fludd – Robertus de Fluctibus – the English Rosicrucian* (William Peace & Son 1902); J. Godwin, *Robert Fludd, Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* (Shambhala, 1979).

FLYING OINTMENT

AN ANCIENT and very widespread belief held that witches could fly through the air, riding upon broomsticks, staves, forks, or upon the backs of demons in animal form, and sometimes, though more rarely, without any visible support. Usually they made ready for their journey by smearing their bodies, or the objects upon which they rode, with a magical ointment given to them by the Devil, or prepared according to his instructions.

It is known how some of these flying ointments are made because a number of English and Continental writers in the 16th and 17th centuries described the methods; all the recipes contained extracts from strongly poisonous plants. The ingredients most commonly listed were aconite, deadly nightshade, hemlock, and the boiled fat and marrow of babies who had been stolen from their homes before they were baptized, or dug up from their graves. Reginald Scot in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), recorded that the 'bowels and members' of such children were seethed in a cauldron, and the thickest part of the resultant grease was used as a basis for the ointment. Other ingredients mentioned in various prescriptions were cinquefoil, sweet flag, poplar leaves, the blood of bats or lapwings, parsley, soot and, if human fat was omitted, some sort of oil. Francis Bacon who, like Reginald Scot before him, was inclined to ascribe the supposed witch flights to imagination or drug-induced delusions, noted in *Sylva Sylvarum* (1608) that 'the ointment that witches use is reported to be made of the fat of children digged out of their graves; of the juices of smallage (wild celery), wolfbane, and cinquefoil, mingled with the meal of fine wheat; but I suppose that the soporiferous medicines are likest to do it.'

Although the use of flying ointments was widely credited, there was curiously little evidence for it in the recorded confessions of the witches themselves. Claire Goessen, a Belgian witch, confessed in 1603 that she had flown to the sabbath on more than one occasion, riding upon a staff smeared with an unguent. In 1460, in northern France, five accused women admitted that the Devil gave them a salve which they rubbed on their hands and on a small wooden rod, and then placing the rod between their legs, they flew away, 'above good towns and woods and waters' to their meeting-place.


Michael Holford

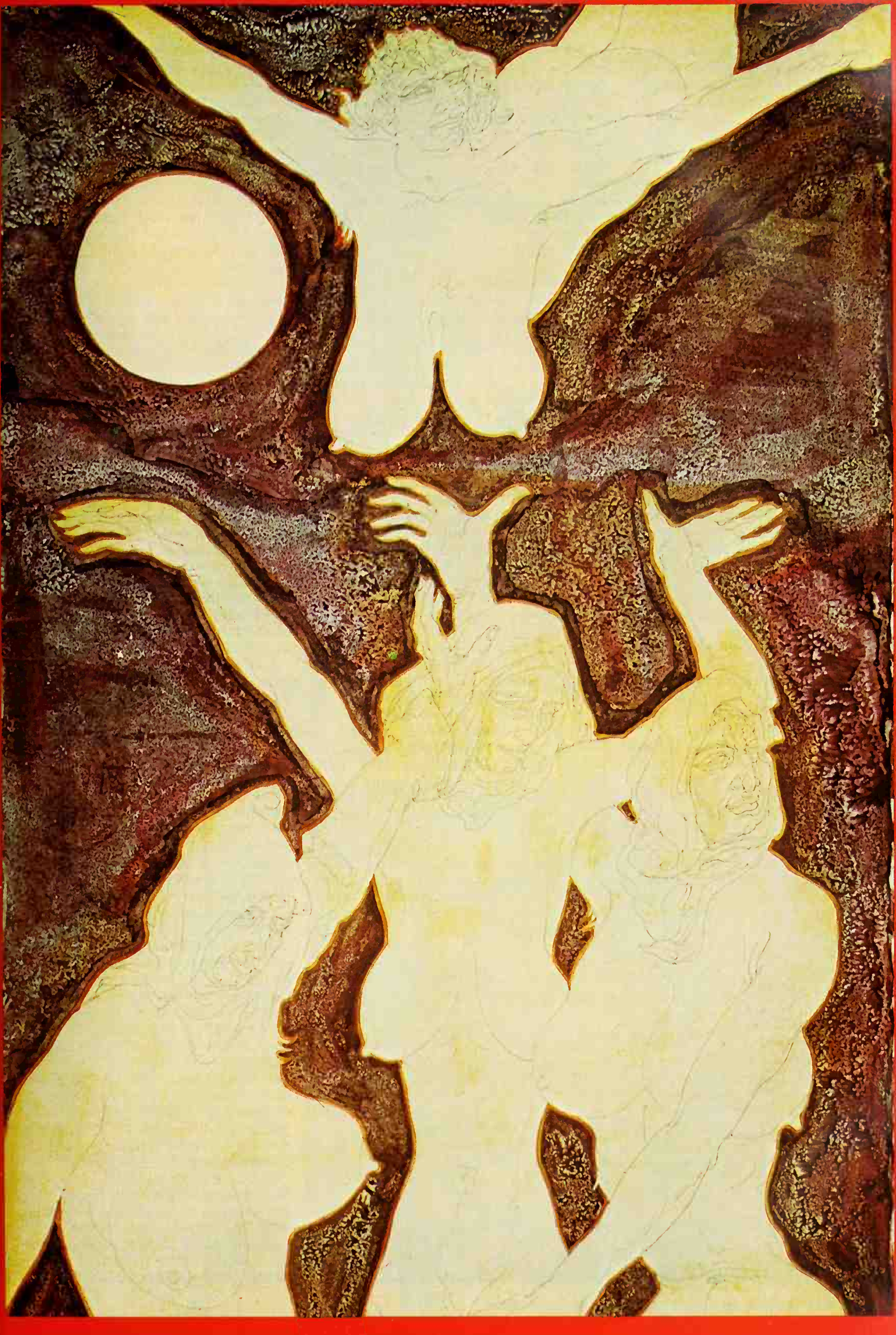
Above **A witch is smeared with flying ointment in preparation for flight: detail from David Teniers' *Scène de Sorcière*. One explanation of the witches' ability to fly was that the ointment contained a hallucinatory drug *Right* Painting of witches by Austin Osman Spare**

The Swedish witches of 1669, who rode 'over Churches and high walls' to Blocula upon a beast provided by the Devil, said that he gave them 'a horn with a Salve in it, wherewith we do anoint ourselves'. The members of two Somerset covens confessed in 1664 that, before they went to their meetings, they smeared their wrists and foreheads with a greenish oil, 'which smells raw', and which their Spirit gave them, 'and then they are carried in a very short time, using these words as they pass, *Thout, tout a tout, tout, throughout and about*.' The impression given in these, and other similar confessions, is that the occult properties of the ointment were essential to the power of flight, but evidently this was not always the case. Some witches spoke of flying without any preliminary anointment, simply by straddling a staff, or a straw, or a hollow stalk, and uttering an incantation. In *Disquisitionum Magicarum* (1599) Martin Delrio remarked that the Devil was able to carry witches to the sabbath without the help of any unguents, and that he often did so; but for several reasons, he preferred that his servants should first anoint themselves.

Learned opinion was never quite unanimous on the question of whether witches actually flew or merely imagined that they did Most writers on the subject accepted that demonic transportation, with or without the use of flying ointments was possible, and did in fact occur. There were however others who held that the witches' confessions of flight were due to hallucinations or vivid dreams As far back as the 9th century, the document known as the Canon Episcopi condemned as demon-induced error the claims made by certain women that they had flown through the air with Diana, riding in large companies upon beasts over immense tracts of country in the dead of the night. Such women were deceived by sinful fantasies inspired by Satan, who 'deludes the minds of his subjects in sleep, so that the victim believes that these things, which only her spirit experiences, she really experiences in the body.'

A tale recounted by Nider in *Formicarius* (1517) suggests that flying dreams could be caused by the magical ointment itself. A certain woman anointed herself with an unguent while she was sitting in a kneading-trough. She fell asleep and dreamt that she was flying, rocking the trough so violently that she fell out of it and injured her head. John Cotta in *The Triall of Witchcraft* (1616) quoted an Italian story related by the natural philosopher Giambattista della Porta (1540–1615) concerning a woman who, having rubbed herself with ointment went into a trance, from which she could not be roused, even when shaken and beaten. When she finally woke of her own accord she declared she had been flying over seas and mountains, and could not be convinced that she had been asleep in her own room all the time.

In an appendix to Dr Margaret Murray's *Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, Professor A. J. Clark pointed out that the strong poisons contained in flying ointments would have definite physiological effects, especially if rubbed into skins broken by scratches or the bites of vermin. Aconite produces irregular action of the heart; hemlock and belladonna (deadly nightshade) produce excitement and delirium. An unguent containing a combination of these drugs could cause delusions which, in some cases, might account for the witches' confessions of magical flight.



Rustic dramas portraying the life-cycle, still performed as far apart as Britain and the Balkans, include characters which can be traced back to the fertility gods of the Middle East

FOLKPLAYS

TWO SEASONAL PEAKS, the summer and winter festivals, stand out prominently in the British calendar of folk customs. The summer customs stretch from Easter to harvest time, while winter covers customs from Michaelmas to Ash Wednesday.

Central to the summer group are the May Games and the Tree of Life, a term used to include both Maypole (see MAYPOLE) and Cross. The main feature of the winter group is the life-cycle, a dramatic portrayal of the death and resurrection of Nature as experienced at the turn of the year in Europe. This folkplay survives as fragments of a festival which must reach right back into Neolithic times.

In the British Isles, it is known under a variety of names, the most common being the Christmas Mummers; these are play actors, local village folk, who disguise themselves by wearing masks or by blacking their faces with soot. They are known as guisers or guizards in the North of England, Geesers or Geese dancers in Cornwall. In some localities, the players appear at Easter and are called Pace-Eggers, or at Hallowe'en or All Souls Eve, when they are known as Soul Cakers. In the Isle of Man the actors are the White Boys and in Scotland the Galatians. Many of the plays revolve round St George and his hand-to-hand combat with such adversaries as the Turkish Knight, the Black Prince of Paradise and Bold Slasher.

Another set of folkplays portrays the life-cycle from another angle and with a different set of characters. Since these plays are acted on Plough Monday and include a courting or marriage scene, they are called Plough Plays or Wooing Plays. They have also been found as an integral part of the elaborate sword dances in the North of England. Irrespective of type all these plays depict the life-cycle and symbolize the continuing vitality and fertility of Nature.

The Surviving Tradition

Although Christmas mumming as a widespread village custom has largely died out in Britain, it survives overseas in the West Indies, Newfoundland and in those parts of North America where the English traditions have been carried on by settlers. Often the mumming is little beyond the disguising of faces and dressing up in garments of the opposite sex, wearing masks, or blackening the face with soot and visiting neighbours' homes to dance and sing. If a masquerader should by mischance be recognized, this is everywhere regarded as bad luck.

Central to the plot is the death by combat, or ritual murder, of a hero at the hands of antagonists. This sacrificial death is lamented and is followed by a cure or resurrection, and finally the mystery of life is celebrated by everybody in song and dance.

The following outline of a Christmas mummers' play, performed and recorded at Symondsbury in west Dorset in recent times, is more elaborate than most versions and contains features not often found associated in any single version.

There are four separate scenes: the exploits of St George, Tommy the Pony (a three-legged hobby-horse), a rough wooing and the 'singing of the travels'. The actors all men, are disguised, St George and the 'Champions' wearing tall hats with paper streamers or ribbons hanging over their faces – except for Jan, the husbandman, dressed in a smock and Bet, his wife, in a long-skirted dress and bonnet. Jan carries a club made out of a young crab-apple tree.

The Mummers' Play

Jan enters, further disguised as Father Christmas, to act as 'Presenter' and to prepare the way. He then introduces the next character whom he calls 'Room'; this is an accretion, for normally the Presenter himself will say 'make room'. Introducing himself, Room goes on to tell of how St George in his travels met and married the King of Egypt's daughter. He then calls in the King of Egypt, who in turn summons St George. The latter boasts of his deeds and during his vaunting one of his friends, St Patrick, enters. He offers to help St George to fight his battles and kills the first of the antagonists, Captain Bluster, who then retires back-stage to kneel on one knee leaning on his sword.

The next antagonist reels in somewhat drunk, is slain by St George and joins Captain Bluster. The third adversary enters, is slain by St George and joins the other two victims while St George, wiping his blade, calls on Colonel Spring. St George at once repeats his success, but Colonel Spring, after kneeling 'dead' beside the other three, suddenly rises to fight again before he is finally killed. The two victorious champions St George and St Patrick then express their deep sorrow, lamenting for the dead men's wives and children.

After discussing the merits of various doctors they call on a doctor, who appears dressed in silk hat and morning coat. He talks of his travels and his skill, bargaining for a large fee before he gives his services. St George hands him a bag of money. Boasting and showing off the Doctor produces his bottle of medicine, 'elecampane', which cures 'all sorts' and after giving a drop to each of the four kneeling victims in turn, restores and dismisses them.

In the second scene Bet enters leading in Tommy the Pony; the mummer, completely covered with a cloth, leans forward on a pole which protrudes from the cloth and is surmounted by a wooden horse's head. Bet mounts the back of Tommy and is riding him cleverly when Jan enters; she challenges him to ride Tommy. Jan accepts but is at once thrown by the hobby-horse. In a fury, Jan picks up his club and fells Tommy to the ground. Bet laments the death of her pony and persuades Jan to help her to revive it. They 'lay on hands', first blowing on them to warm them and swinging their arms to make the blood flow. They try to lift Tommy up but he falls down again. Defeated, they call on the Champions who march in and set the horse back on his three legs. Bet now announces that her pony tells fortunes and asks Tommy to smell out certain evil-doers; the hobby horse picks out several innocent victims, to the delight of the spectators.

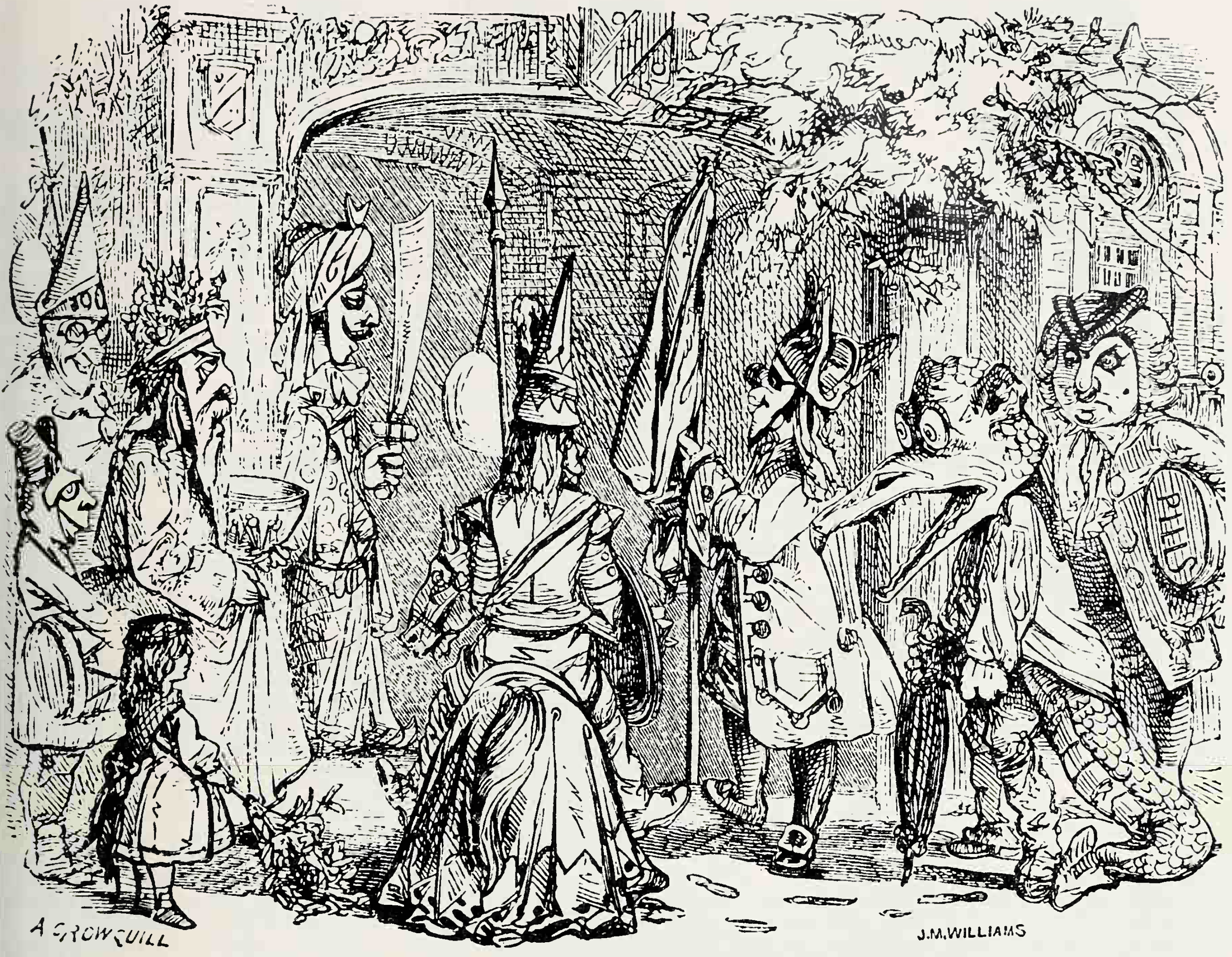
The third scene opens with Jan and Bet quarrelling. Jan knocks down Bet who lies as if dead. After much rude fooling, she is revived by the Doctor, and in the next scene Jan and Bet and the Pony form a family group. The other mummers march round the group once clockwise and once anti-clockwise singing a version of the folk song *The Serving Man and the Husbandman*. At the end of each round the singers stand facing centre while Jan in reply speaks his verse rejecting the life of luxury and ease enjoyed by the serving man. At once the ring of mummers repeat their round dance, singing the verses for Jan to speak his unqualified rejection, each time seconded warmly by Bet. The Doctor makes a final speech inviting the mistress of the house to tie a piece of ribbon upon the Christmas holly bough, when on behalf of the mummers he wishes her and everyone present a happy Christmas.

The fundamental features of this type of play are the 'making of room' which may include a sweeper or whiffler to clear the space for the mystery drama; the 'calling on' or introduction by the Presenter of the combatants and other actors in turn; the dispute leading to death; the lament; the call for the Doctor; the cure and the *quete* or collection of the reward, important because by contributing to the collection the spectators become participators and so able to share in any benefits from the magic luck.

The Plough Plays

The other type of folkplay, the Plough Plays, also belong, broadly speaking, to the Christmas season: they were performed usually in January, on the first Monday after Epiphany. The performers call themselves Plough Jacks, Plough Stots, Boggons or even Morris Dancers. Their leader is not St George but a 'Fool' accompanied by a man in woman's clothes called Bessy or Betty. There is some sort of conflict with a death and revival but there is also a wooing in which the Fool vies with his eldest son for the hand of the 'Fair Lady'. There is confusion and overlapping of incidents in the two types of play. St George may appear in the Plough Play and challenge and kill the Fool who is then revived by the Doctor. The Fool then courts and marries the 'Lady'. The Fool's wooing may be found without either the combat or the cure. Some of the dialogue has obviously been borrowed from printed sources which would suggest some contact between strolling professional actors and local folk mummers.

There are many European variants of the Masquerade, some leaning toward the popular carnival festivals, some preserving an intensely individual tradition as in the Basque festivals of the *mascarades* and the *pastourelles*. One primitive surviving custom is the *poklade*, the pre-Lenten play



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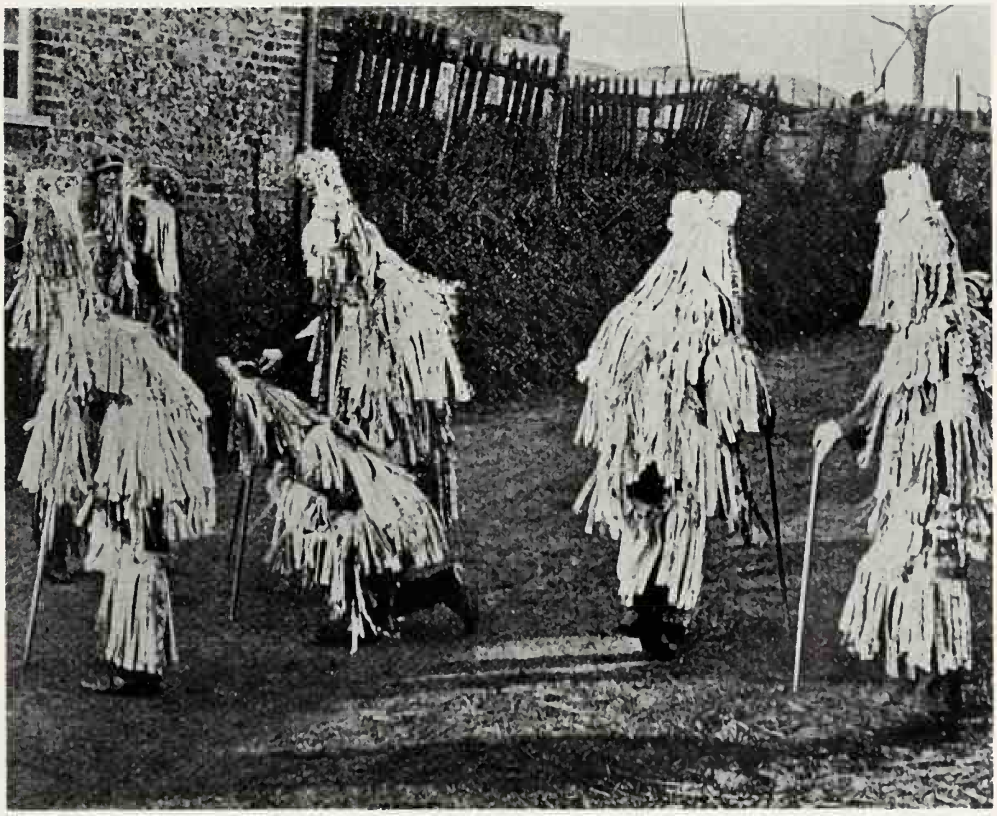
The Christmas mummers' play is a dramatic portrayal of the death and resurrection of Nature as experienced at the turn of the year, and draws its characters from a rich source of folk history *Above* Mummers arrive at the door of the 'big house' in Victorian times: St George on his horse, Father Christmas, the Turkish knight, the Doctor and others *Right* Traditional mumming took a variety of forms: Overton mummers at Freefolk, Hampshire, in the 1930s, apparently all dressed like hobby-horses

of the Adriatic coast, performed on the two days before Ash Wednesday. In this custom there are three chief actors, a Fool, a Priest and a Baba or Witch. They are served by a retinue of a score of dancers in two contingents, ten men dressed as girls and ten girls dressed as men who dance alone and together. The three characters carry bags of soot and ashes which they throw over themselves and at the spectators when they are not fooling or behaving in an obscene manner.

In the case of the Romanian version of the folkplay the action takes place within the hilt and point circle of sword dancers who never cease to 'step' while the play lasts. Here the hand-to-hand combat is between a Turk and a Russian. The latter is



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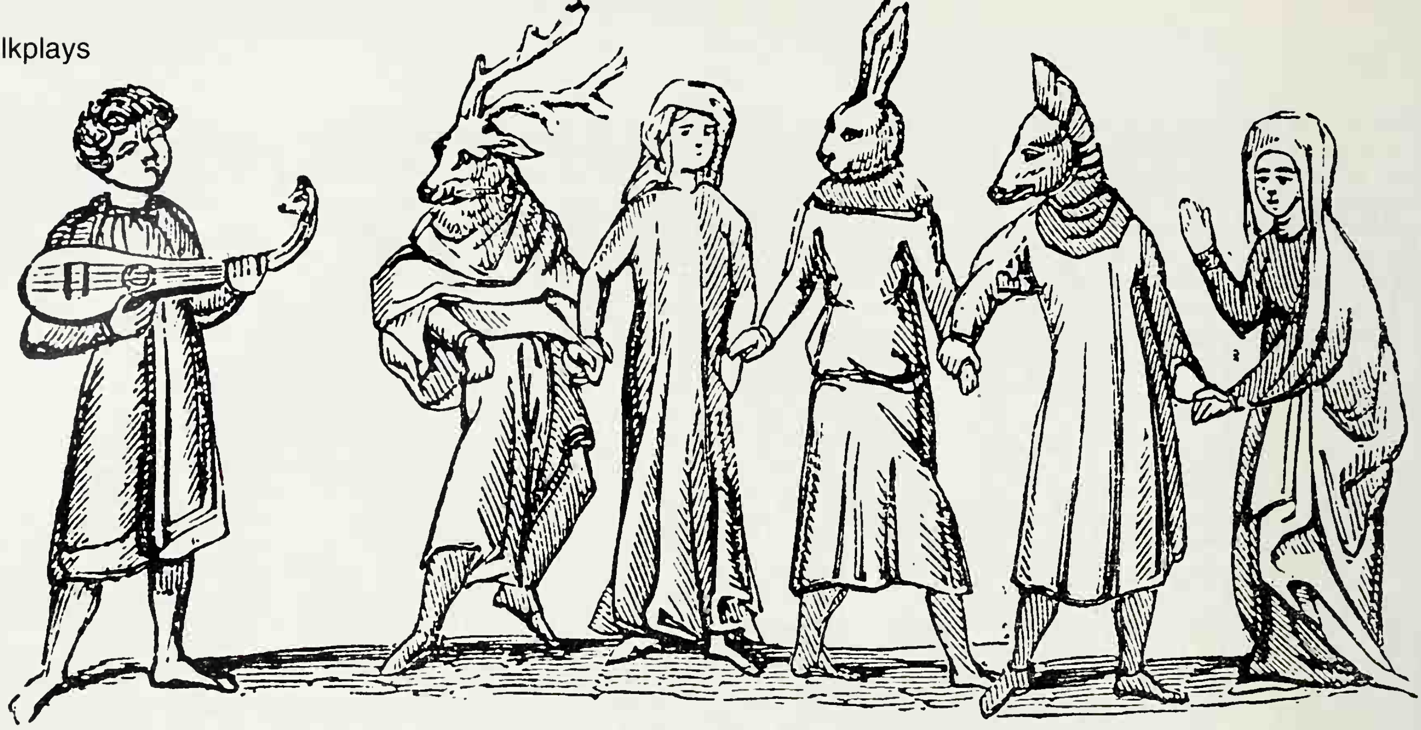

Origins in fertility ritual are apparent in this woodcut of 14th-century mummers

slain and an 'Orthodox Priest' attempts but fails to revive him.

One more parallel may be mentioned from the village of Haghios Gheorgios in Thrace, a festival held two days before Ash Wednesday. The leading actors are two 'gypsies', who must be married men, wearing head-dresses of animal skin brought down over the faces to form masks. Their shoulders are so heavily padded as to make them hump-backed. Their hands are blackened and they wear sheep-bells round their waists. One carries a cross-bow made to shoot ashes from a horn and the other a phallus. With them are two unmarried boys dressed as their wives. An old woman, the Babo, carries a basket with a doll to represent a bastard baby. More gypsies with blackened hands carrying rods, whips and swords and a bagpiper complete the troop.

In the play proper, the first scene shows a gypsy man and wife sitting down forging a ploughshare. Then Babo cries that her bastard is too big for the basket and he becomes the Phallus-bearer and marries one of the Brides. The second scene shows the Cross-bow bearer stalking the Phallus-bearer, whom he shoots. There is a lamentation and suddenly the victim comes to life. The forging of the plough is continued and a complete plough is then brought on drawn by the 'girls' while the blackfaced gypsies drive it. Later the two masked humpbacked gypsies are beaten with rods.

Actors of Prehistory

Further comparison of these Balkan folkplays emphasizes their close resemblance to some of the British examples. Were it not for the European analogues it might well have been assumed that the St George Mummers Play and the Plough Play were mere rustic echoes of the strolling theatrical companies familiar to country folk since Tudor days. Theatrical plays have been written round the legend of St George since the 16th century, but it seems certain that the folkplays in origin long antedate any such dramatic invention and that it has been an integral part of country life familiar as an old tradition to Shakespeare and to playwrights long before his time.

The portrayal of the life-cycle with birth, death and resurrection is pre-Christian and probably pre-civilization. The principal actors can be traced back through recorded history to prehistory. The Fool and Baba or Bet under different guise can be traced to the Middle East where they merge with the Priest-King and the fertility Earth Goddess. The Mother Goddess has been traced to the earliest centre of civilization in Anatolia where she was worshipped by the Hittites. Later she appears in classical mythology as Artemis, Cybele and Demeter and in the still more familiar figure of Diana of the Ephesians. Ashes and soot must have been fertility emblems since the earliest times when husbandry depended on burning a patch of forest or scrub to make room for the mystery of the sprouting seed.

Thus the folkplay in its various forms may be regarded as a starting point for investigation into mythology, drama and religion as well as more homely institutions such as Punch and Judy, the Pantomime and the Harlequinade. Indeed one can take any of the folkplay characters and embark on a voyage of surprising discovery. (See also DRAMA; MYSTERY PLAYS.)

DOUGLAS KENNEDY

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Brian Shuel

Left **Scene from the Midgley Pace-Egg play performed on Good Friday: central to the plot of the folkplay is the death by combat, or ritual murder, of a hero at the hands of antagonists** ***Right*** **His death is lamented and the doctor is called upon to effect a cure or resurrection: scene from the Brighouse Pace-Egg play performed on Easter Saturday**

Similar basic themes are found in the folktales of different ages and different parts of the world; even such a sophisticated, period tale as 'Cinderella' can have primitive origins

FOLKTALES

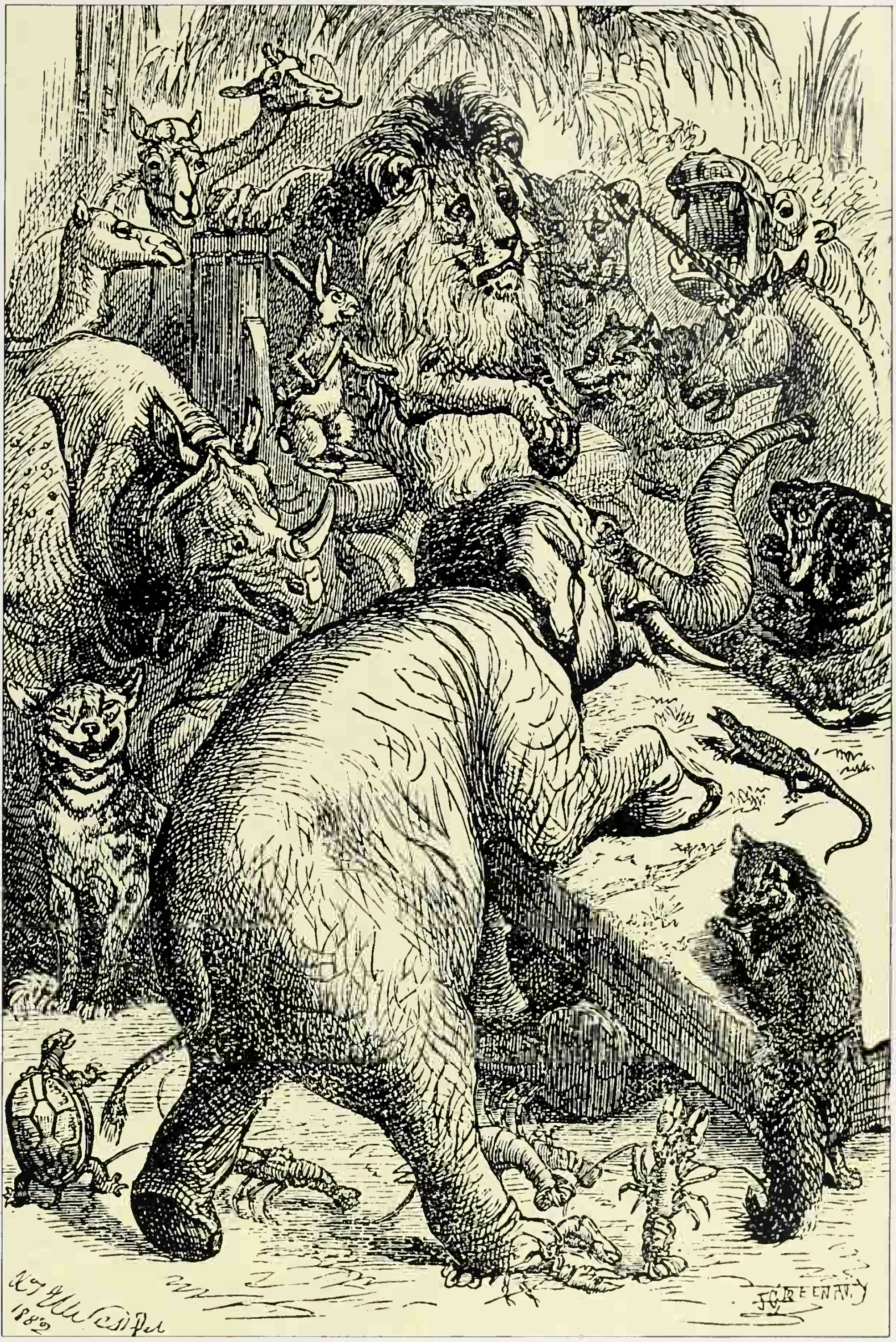
THE CUSTOM OF STORY-TELLING goes back to prehistoric times, and no race, nation or tribe has yet been recorded which had no stories; the habit is common to primitive savages and elaborate civilizations. Furthermore, incidents and practices which are easily explained in the savage tales make unexpected appearances in the civilized ones: often we can only judge the age of a story by the presence of these fossils embedded in it.

The Cinderella story, as we know it best in the urbane, courtly style of the 17th-century Perrault, seems a very civilized affair indeed. There is a cruel stepmother, certainly, there are ugly stepsisters, but their cruelty is sophisticated and modern. They make Cinderella into a servant and a drudge, taunt her and mock at her, but there are none of the barbarities of some fairy tales.

The story is an affair of a court ball and a royal marriage. The cruel sisters, instead of being put into a spiked barrel and rolled downhill, or some such atrocity, are forgiven in the end and have good matches found for them. The fairy who engineers the happy ending is a fairy godmother – a curious anomaly, combining Christian and pagan elements. One would say that never was there a story that was more securely rooted in its period, yet when one examines other variants of the Cinderella type more primitive things begin to emerge.

The Highland tale of The Sharp Grey Sheep is a good example. The whole setting here is simpler and less sophisticated. A native turn is given to it. The festivity here is not a ball, but attendance at church. What is most significant however, is the supernatural machinery. This is supplied not by a fairy but by an animal, which is killed by the wicked stepmother and is revived by putting together its bones and skin. In another version it springs up as a tree when its bones are buried.

This is a motif in a Russo-Karelian version, The Wonderful Birch, to be found in Andrew Lang's *Red Fairy Book*. Here the animal who befriended the heroine was her own mother, turned into a sheep by the witch who supplanted her. It is probable that we arrive here near to the original tale, in which the magic was worked by the ancestral totem animal. Where we find these transmigrations and revivals in another form after death we guess at an early origin for the tale.

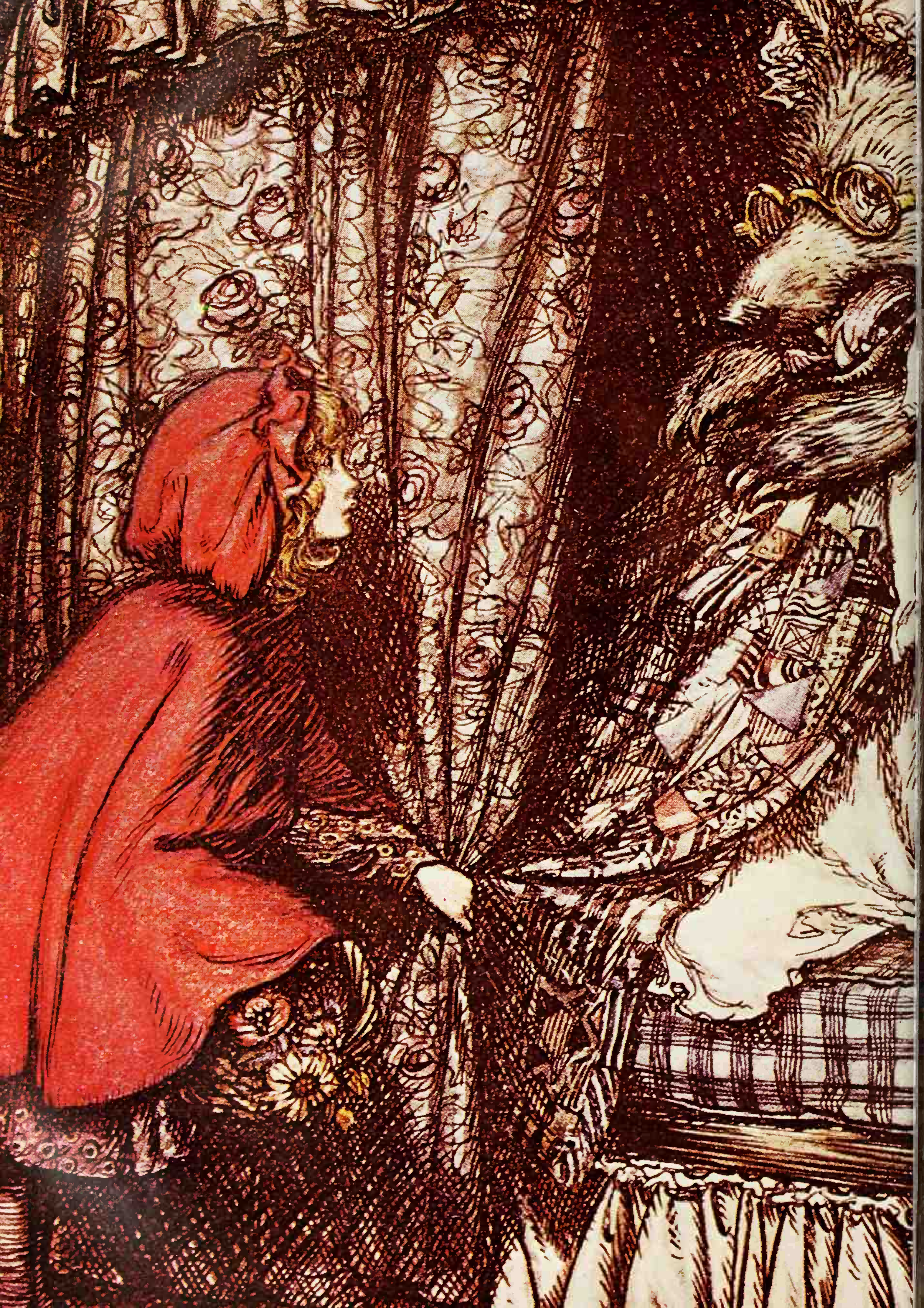


'De Elephent squashed anudder one er de Crawfishes,' from the Uncle Remus stories by Joel Chandler Harris. These stories are based on African folktales carried to America by slaves and were probably also influenced by the Great Rabbit of Algonquin Indian mythology

The Separable Soul

All this, however, is conjecture; but there are certain stories that can be dated. An example is The Tale of the Two Brothers, which was deciphered from an Egyptian papyrus at least 3000 years old and contains themes which are found again and again in tales told all over Europe up to the present day. It is a tale of the 'separable soul'. The hero hides his soul in a sycamore tree and his false wife betrays his secret to her lover, the Pharaoh, who has the tree cut down. Then the hero dies, but his brother finds him and brings him back to life and he takes the form of a sacred bull. His wicked wife has the bull slain, but he again takes the form of a tree; and when she has that cut down one of the chips flies into her mouth, and the hero is born again from his own wife; when he comes to manhood he destroys her as a punishment for her treachery.

Here we have the same motif as in the more primitive Cinderella story mentioned earlier, in which the slaughtered sheep becomes a tree. (The idea that a birth follows the swallowing of some object occurs in the beautiful Irish tale of Midir and Etain which was dramatized in modern times in *The Immortal Hour*; Etain was a fairy girl who was turned by a jealous rival into a gnat, after which a mortal queen swallowed her and she was born again as a mortal princess.) Usually in modern folktales it is a giant or a witch whose soul is kept in a hidden place for safety. Often it is in an egg, and the giant cannot be killed



until the egg is broken on his forehead. Until quite modern times this was told, not as a story, but as a solemn piece of belief. In Sarah Hewett's *Nummits and Crummits* she tells of a witch in Somerset who believed that she could not die until a bucket of toads beneath her bed was destroyed. She had hidden her soul in one of the toads, and she lingered on in pain until a neighbour destroyed them.

Andrew Lang in *Custom and Myth* traced the plot of the Jason legend through various modern versions such as Nicht Nought Nothing, The Battle of the Birds and The Master Maid, through Red Indian, Samoan and Finnish versions, and found many remarkable resemblances. The main plot is the same, that of a hero in the power of an evil magician, who sets him impossible tasks, which the hero performs through the magic of the magician's daughter, who has fallen in love with him. The two lovers take flight, pursued by the magician, and make good their escape by flinging behind them delaying objects.

In the Jason myth, which is realistically treated, Medea murders and cuts up her little brother and throws the fragments into the sea, and his father is delayed by gathering the floating members to give them burial. In the fairy stories magic objects are thrown behind the lovers, which transform themselves into obstacles, a comb into a forest, and so on. In all the stories the daughter's impiety is somehow punished, generally by a magic forgetfulness on the lover's part. In the Jason legend there is a fatal quarrel between Jason and Medea; in the Theseus and Ariadne story, which is another version of the same plot, Ariadne is deserted by Theseus on the island of Naxos; n the later fairy tales the lovers come together in the end.

The excavations at Cnossus show that there is some historical foundation to the egend of the labyrinth of Crete and the fight with the Minotaur; the fact that some historical basis can be found for the Theseus legend does not however mean that the story originally sprang from there. Even a slight resemblance has the power of attracting to it a pre-existent legend.

The question of the origin of folk tales has exercised scholars ever since folklore became a recognized discipline. How did these stories come to be told in the first place, and how is it that strikingly similar tales can be found all over the world? These two questions were hotly debated by the folklorists and scholars of the 19th century.

The first great theory on the origin of folktales was put forward with great erudition by Max Muller. According to him nearly all folktales – even the homeliest – had their foundation in solar myths, Sanskrit names for sun, dawn and sky, forgotten and distorted by a 'disease of language'. He cut the ground from under his opponents' feet by maintaining that no one could argue about the origin of the Indo-Germanic tales without a sound knowledge of Sanskrit. Such ardent disciples as George Cox pushed his theories to extreme lengths.

Folktales, handed on from generation to generation of ordinary people, are now being systematically catalogued by students of folklore, and their origins, similarities and diffusion carefully investigated; illustration to 'Red Riding Hood', by Arthur Rackham

Another group of scholars, the 'anthropological school' next arose, which did not completely abandon the solar myths, but found the origin of many of the tales in primitive fertility rituals and animistic belief. Andrew Lang was a notable exponent of this school of thought, which originated with Sir Edward Tylor and continued in the works of Sir James Frazer.

A slightly different theory put forward by Jane Harrison and later supported by Lord Raglan is that the folktales developed as an explanation of half-forgotten ritual. In more modern times it has been pointed out that those tales which employ the symbolic archetypes of the unconscious mind have a greater survival value than others.

Transmission of Tales

When we come to the question of transmission, various theories have again been urged. It used often to be said that all our European folktales originated in India and were carried through Europe on the waves of Indo-Germanic invasion. It is certain that many of them are very old and that many resemble each other too closely to have arisen independently. It seems an unproved assumption, however, that no tales arose later, and this theory does not account for the similar tales to be found in Australia, Japan and among the American Indians. Where there is an urge to tell tales some originators will be found.

It must be noticed too, that tales are often classed together because of general similarity of theme such as might arise out of the human situation independently. All stories about cruel stepmothers need not stem from an archetype Cinderella story; there are second wives all over the world, and jealousy is, unfortunately, a common human emotion. Where a difficult situation is insoluble and a happy ending is needed the Supernatural Helper might be paradoxically described as the natural solution.

There are said to be only eleven basic plots in the world, but when we come to an intricate succession of detailed happenings some tales are too close to each other for them to arise by any other means than borrowing. Here we can sometimes date the twin stories by the details they have in common. Where, for instance, we have a coach in two stories we may be sure that one derived from the other in the 17th century or later. There were carts and chariots before then, but not coaches.

It must be borne in mind that there are other methods of tale transmission as well as mass migration. One shipwrecked sailor if he stays long enough to learn the language can carry a tale from Ireland to Japan. Foreign wives must have had great influence in transmitting tales in their time. Gypsies and tinkers have taken the place of wandering bards, slaves carried the Brer Rabbit stories from Africa to America. There are endless ways in which tales can be transmitted, but they must find congenial soil before they can take root.

The modern emphasis on folktale problems is rather on assembling data than on shaping theories. There are two principal ways in which this research can be carried out. The first is by the classification of all known tales in their relevant types and the second is the production of monographs on particular tales and their variants. The two methods are complementary to each other.

The fullest method of classification, now used in all national archives, was instituted by the Finnish scholar Antti Aarne and brought to completion by Stith Thompson. According to this system, all recorded tales are divided into broad classes: animal tales, ordinary folktales, novelle, religious tales, and so on, and each recorded plot within these boundaries is given a number. Some tales, of course, escape the mesh and have to be separately listed, but these are mostly tales with a local or national diffusion, and not those that have qualified as international tale-types.

There is one great class of tale which is hardly represented in this type list and that is folk legend. The omission is intentional; there is a broad distinction between folk narratives and folk legends. The former are folk fiction, not supposed to be factual, whereas legends were believed by the people who told them to have actually happened. Sometimes very similar tales are narratives and legends respectively. An example is the Jason legend, which has almost the same plot as undoubted fairy tales, like The Battle of the Birds, but was told of a hero who was supposed to have an historical existence.

Some work has been done on the legends, but the lists of migratory legend types mostly relate to particular areas and much work remains to be done here. A monumental work invaluable in studying both narratives and legends is Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. A motif is the separate strand of a tale; a perfect folktale is made up of a collection of motifs, though some anecdotes consist of only one.

Much progress has been made. New techniques of collecting have been worked out, the history, background and characters of tale-tellers is now studied, and each teller's variations on a story to suit different audiences. Nearly every country has established archives of folktales, and these are rapidly becoming crammed with tales accurately reported and carefully documented. The time will soon come when the emphasis can shift from collection and cataloguing, and we can set to work again on the problems of origin and diffusion.

K.M. BRIGGS

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FOOD & DRINK

When Sir Charles McCarthy was killed by the Ashanti in 1824, the chiefs devoured his heart, and his bones were kept as national fetishes

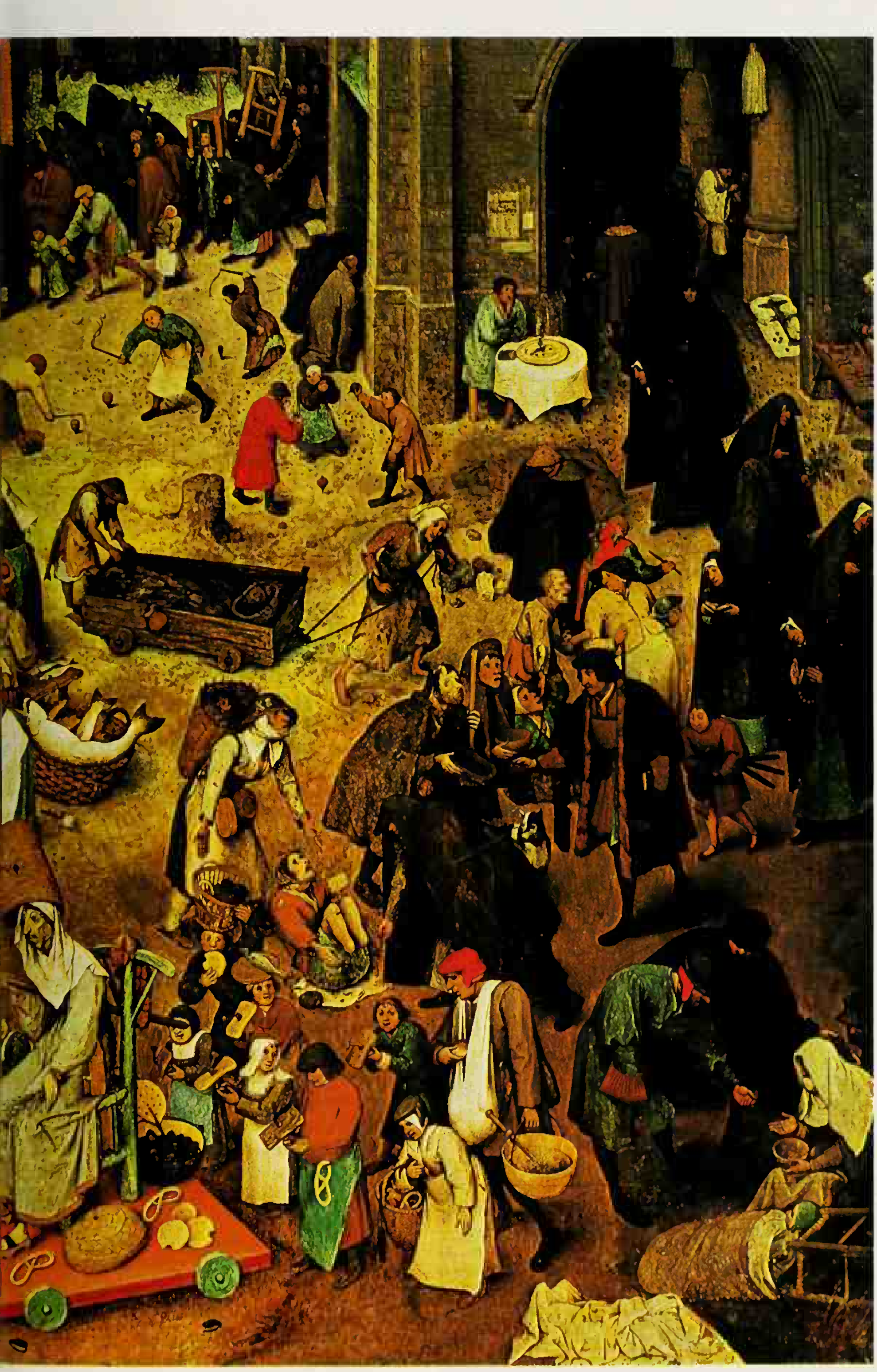


Photo Meyer/Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

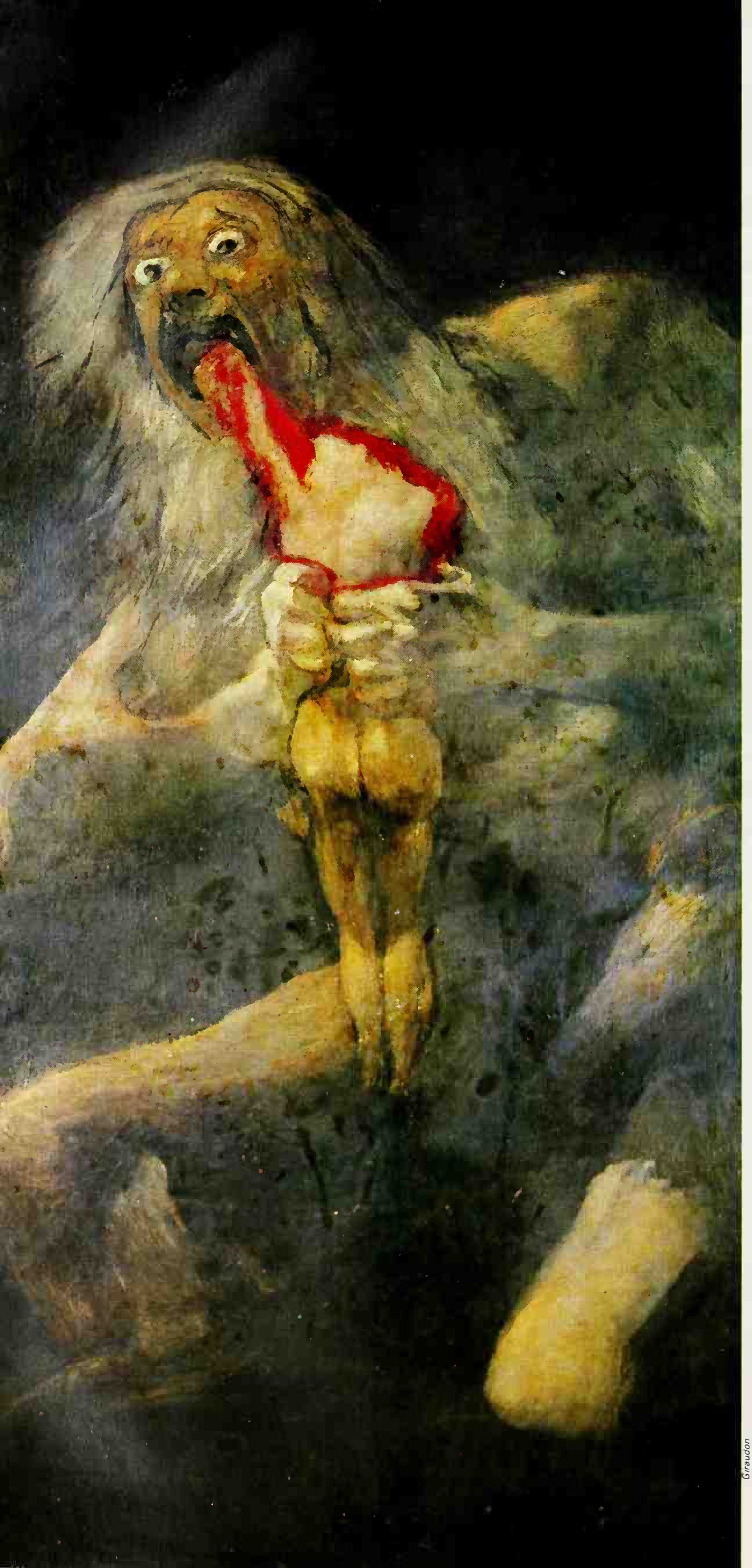
Breughel's *Battle Between Carnival and Lent:* Carnival was traditionally the period preceding Lent, taken up with feasting and revelry, in anticipation of the Lenten fast. Here King Carnival, astride a barrel and brandishing an impaled pig's head, confronts Lent, a wretched old woman holding out a wooden shovel with two herrings, the symbol of meagre fare

The idea that to eat a person is to obtain his characteristics is contained in the cannibalistic rituals of primitive tribes and the symbolic consuming of the god in both pagan and Christian religions

SINCE THE DEEPEST NEEDS of man's nature are reflected in religion, myth, magic and superstition, it is hardly surprising that beliefs, ceremonies and prohibitions relating to food and drink should be found in all of them.

The idea expressed in the saying 'Man is what he eats' is basic in many primitive societies: men are thought to acquire the characteristics of the animals (or human beings, or gods) that they consume. Indians in Ecuador eat birds, monkeys and game rather than the flesh of heavier animals because they believe that such a diet will make them more agile. Some East African tribesmen used to eat the hearts of lions in order to acquire the courage of lions and avoided hares' hearts lest they should become as timid as hares. In different parts of the world, however, the attributes of the same animal may be variously assessed: in Borneo, for instance, the young warriors avoided venison because the deer was thought of as an animal that is easily scared; but North American Indians preferred to emphasize the deer's speed and sagacity. In *The Golden Bough*, Sir James Frazer records that 'a Chinaman in Seoul bought and ate a whole tiger to make himself brave and fierce', and that 'a North American Indian thought that brandy must be a decoction of hearts and tongues, "because," said he, "after drinking it I fear nothing and I talk wonderfully."'

So much for the mythical virtues derived from eating animals, of which many more instances could be given. But the same principle has been widely extended to the eating of human flesh – most often the heart and liver of a conquered victim. Sometimes


Giraudon

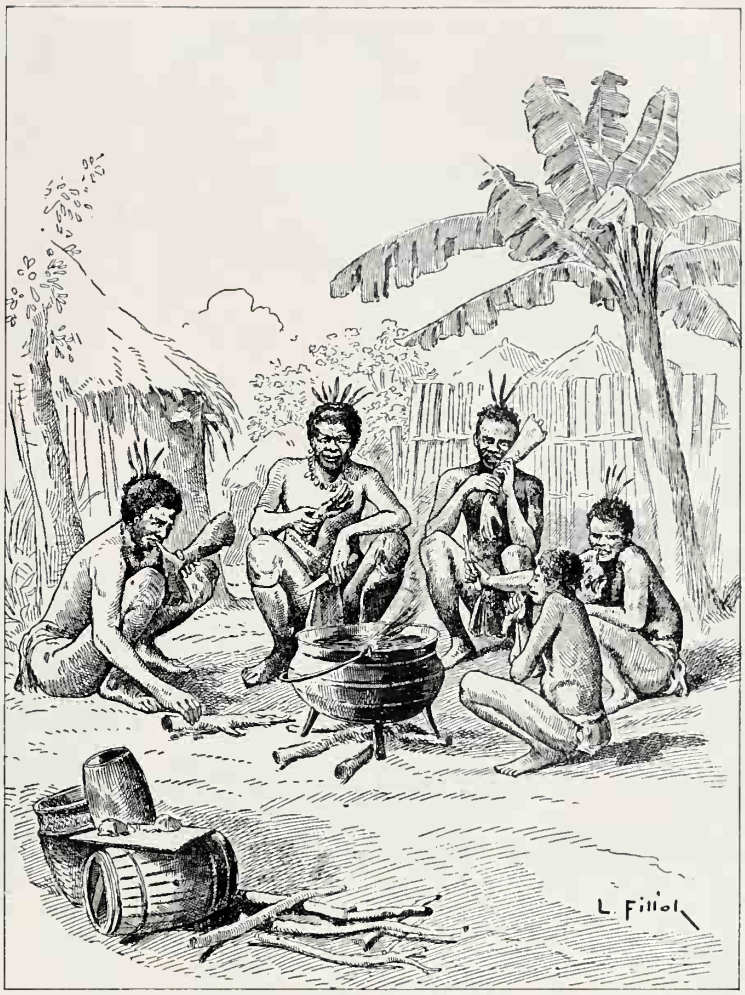
Left **Goya's painting of the Roman god Saturn devouring his son: Saturn was identified with the Greek god Cronus who reigned in heaven until deposed by his son Zeus. He devoured his own children because one of them was fated to overthrow him, but Zeus escaped with the help of his mother Rhea** ***Right*** **Central to the action of the Christian Mass is the taking of the consecrated bread and wine; Christians disagree about whether this ceremony is symbolic or whether it is a literal 'eating of the god', the consumption of Christ's body and blood** ***Far right*** **Cannibalism is often based on the belief that by eating a person you acquire his characteristics**

when a particularly gallant enemy was killed in battle, parts of his body were cut off and burned to ashes: the ashes were mixed into a kind of paste, and this was preserved until it was time for the tribal initiation rites, when it was solemnly distributed to the youths who were being initiated into full membership. In 1824, when Sir Charles McCarthy was killed by the Ashantis, the chiefs devoured his heart, and his bones were kept as national fetishes. Even today cannibalism is sometimes practised ceremonially, either to inherit the dead man's virtues or with the purpose of ensuring future food supplies. One person is responsible for this vital task – the king or chief of the tribe or a specially hallowed rainmaker. If there is a drought, and consequently a poor harvest, the unsuccessful rainmaker is likely to be killed; parts of his body are eaten ritually, the rest scattered over the fields in the hope that these may be thus fertilized. Until fairly recently a rain-making priest in the mountains of Ethiopia would be stoned to death if the harvest failed – and his nearest relatives had to cast the first stones at him.

The Witchety Grub

Imitative sympathetic magic is involved also in attempts to maintain the supply of food. Where fish is a main article of diet, a model of a fish may be thrown into the water and prayers chanted; or a wizard will mime the movements of a swimming fish. As recently as the late 19th century, in the Scottish Highlands, when boys went fishing without success, they would make as if to throw one of their party overboard and haul him in like a fish: it is recorded that the charade sometimes worked.

The most famous and the most elaborate example of this imitative magic is probably that formerly found among the Asunta, in the barren lands of Central Australia, where the tribes are divided into totem clans, a totem usually being an edible animal. Some of the tribesmen eat an insect called the witchety grub; so there is a clan whose totem is this grub. In order to ensure the increase of this insect for the use of the community, the men would sit inside a structure of branches shaped roughly like its chrysalis; they then shuffled out, squatting, and sang of the grub's emergence from the chrysalis. Comparable pantomimes were intended to



Mary Evans Picture Library

afeguard the supply of emus and white ockatoos.

A more macabre method of ensuring a ood crop was used by the Lange tribe in ganda at a festival held every five years. n this occasion there would be a raid on a eighbouring tribe, the Kumam; a tribes- an and his dog were killed and their genital rgans cut off. The scrotum of the man and at of the dog were stuffed with millet seed, nd a rain dance was performed, and the illet shared out. The men took this speci- ly treated millet home and mixed it with e ordinary seed before sowing. The results ere said to be excellent. Such practices, orrifying as they seem today – not least to e educated Africans of Uganda – were uly a part of religion, in its magical aspect; agic seeking to provide, at whatever cost in uman suffering, for the most basic human equirements.

ive Us Our Daily Bread

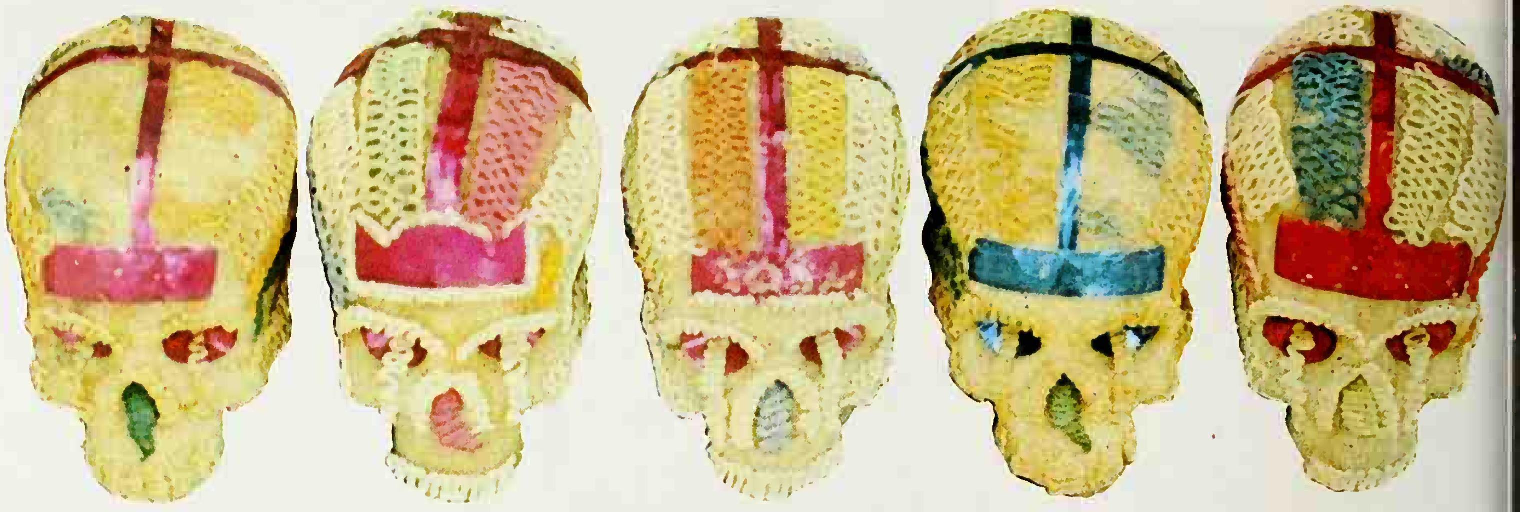
s civilizations advanced, less crude methods achieving this end were evolved; but every vilization at whatever stage of develop- ent, has celebrated with special obser- ances the seasons of sowing and harvest, nd in these observances may always be aced vestiges of the same reliance on super- atural aid. Ancient Romans and Greeks, ews and the various branches of the hristian Church – all have had their har- est festivals. In England, although the old stival of Lammas on 1 August was arked by the offering to God of a loaf made om the new wheat (the word Lammas is a corruption of loaf-mass), the Harvest Festival as it is now observed in the Church of England is a re-introduction from around the 1840s. With its piles of fruit and gigantic marrows, it is a function almost entirely pagan in feeling, with a thin top-dressing of orthodox Anglicanism. Equally pagan, but no less religious in origin, is the custom, still observed in Essex, Suffolk, and elsewhere, of weaving ornate 'corn dollies' from the last sheaf of corn cut on the last day of harvest. It was once believed that the spirit of the corn dwelled in them and that they must be kept safely until the next spring to ensure continuity. The Church is officially 'as by law established' in England and one large-scale farmer is reported annually to invite the rector of his parish to bless his crops, paying him £50 for doing so, and charging this as a necessary expense against income-tax – with a note to the Inspector of Taxes: 'I defy you to assert publicly that this does not improve the property.'

Among Christians, as among believers in other faiths, certain important occasions in life are observed not only by religious ceremonies but also by secular feasts; christenings, weddings and funerals are marked by the serving of special food and drink. In everyday life, believers are admonished to show thankfulness for their food: the prayer most frequently recited by Christians of every allegiance is the Lord's Prayer – a central petition in which is 'Give us this day our daily bread'. The custom of saying grace was once common among the middle and upper classes in Britain although nowadays it is mainly observed at public banquets and institutions. This constant reiteration of Christian concern for material goods and needs has parallels in other religions also – even among those great religions of the East which repudiate the flesh and bodily desire and aspire to pure spirituality. Some worshippers of Krishna, for instance, make an offering at his shrine – a plate full of food – before starting a meal. They believe that then the food they are eating has been blessed (and even, mysteriously, consumed) by Krishna, and that meditating on him while they eat will increase their resources of spiritual energy. (The anthropologist Malinowski held that the Trobriand Islanders did not understand the association between food and the maintenance of bodily strength: they ate simply because they wanted to, out of greed, or because it was the custom.)

Dangerous Food

At least as important as the positive aspects of sympathetic magic in the feeding habits of human beings are the negative aspects – the thou-shalt-nots of myth and magic which can conveniently be summed up in the word taboo. Positive magic means doing something to produce a desired result: negative magic means avoiding an unpleasant result by *not* doing something.

Even taboo, however, is not wholly a negative concept. It embraces two meanings that may seem to be opposite. A taboo person or object is untouchable, either because, being a tribal chief, a totem animal



The person who touches a taboo object or eats taboo food becomes taboo himself, and if he survives, has to undergo lengthy penances and purifications

or god, he or it is too potent and sacred to be touched by lesser persons, or because, like a pregnant woman (in many primitive cultures) or the caste of untouchables in India, the person or thing is considered too unclean to be touched. In the first case, the profane contact will bring a terrible retribution on the toucher: he has been guilty of presumption, since in the words of Freud 'to touch is the beginning of every act of possession, of every attempt to make use of a person or thing.' Even an accidental offender may be so overwhelmed by guilt that he will not recover from his shame. The case is recorded of a healthy young Maori who happened to see the remains of a meal by the roadside and ate it without knowing that the food had been that of a high-ranking chief. As soon as he was told this, 'he was seized by the most extraordinary convulsions and cramp.' He died at sundown.

In the second case – taboo meaning unclean – the infection is equally transmitted by touch. The person who touches a taboo object or eats taboo food becomes taboo himself, and, if he survives, has to undergo lengthy penances and purifications. The common factor between these two concepts is that, whether the person or thing is too holy or too unclean to touch, to touch him or it is dangerous. According to W. Wundt, in *Voelkerpsychologie*, the distinction between the two meanings did not exist in the earliest stages of taboo: there was simply a demonic power within the person or object that punished the toucher by bewitching him.

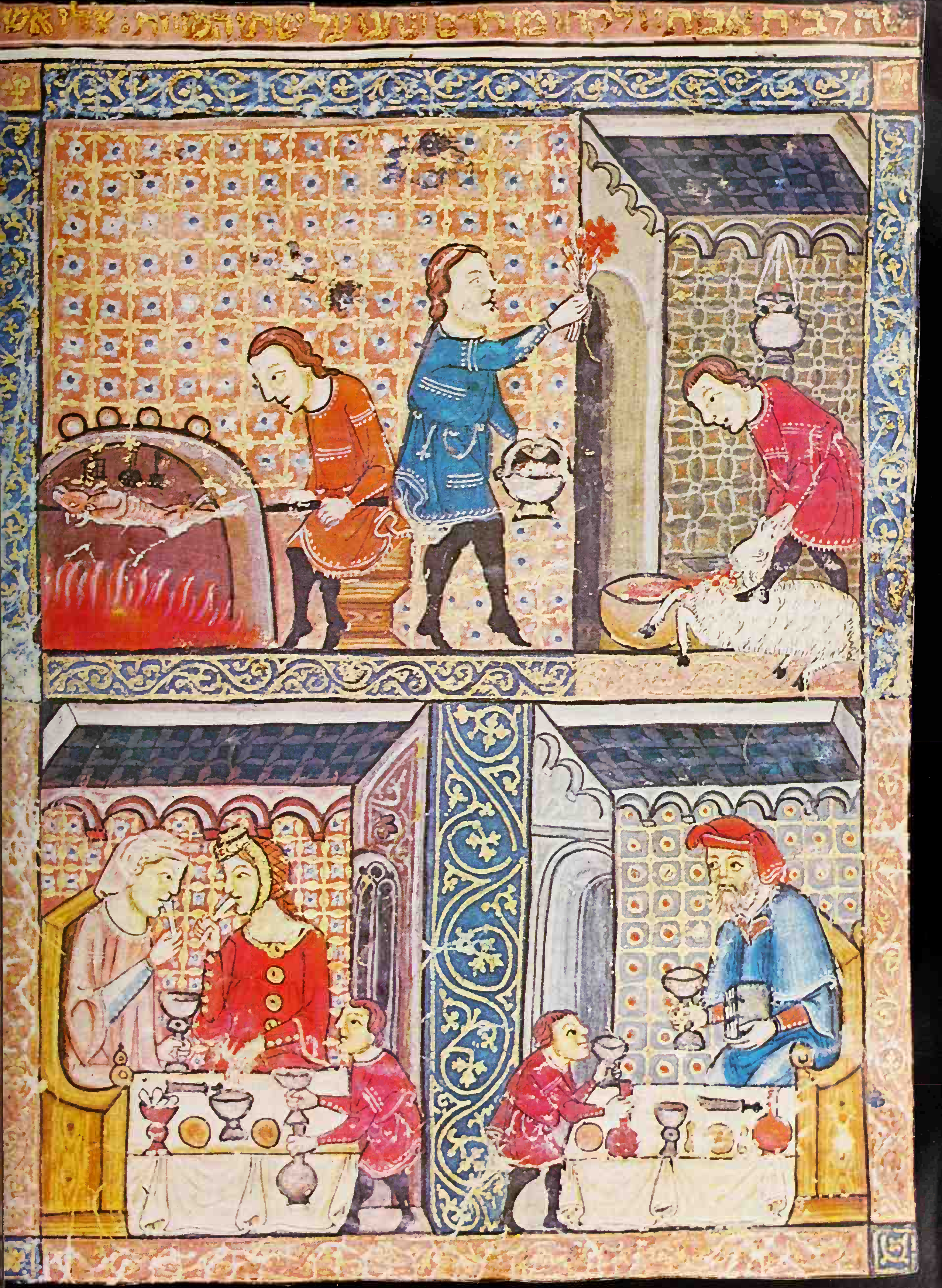
Above **Sugar skulls eaten by Mexicans on All Souls' Day when Catholics pray for the souls suffering in purgatory *Right* The Jewish observance of Passover, from the John Rylands Haggadah. The Passover meal consisted of a sacrificial lamb eaten in thanksgiving to God, benedictions, readings from the Bible over cups of wine, and th eating of unleavened bread**

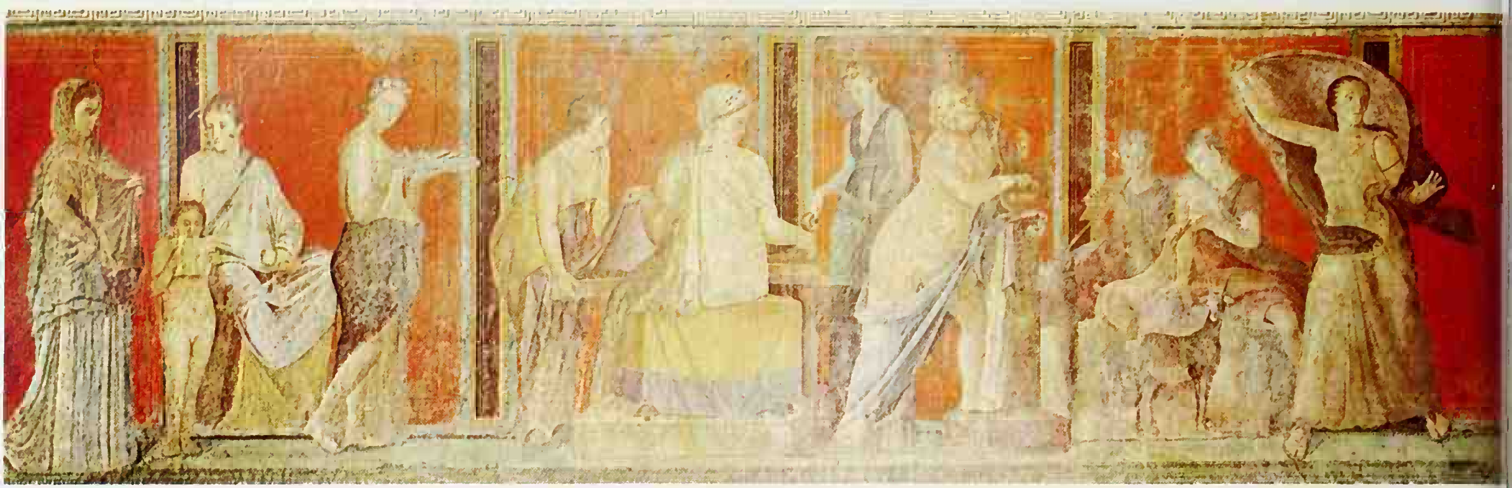
The most obvious example of food tabo that is still widely observed is, perhaps, the dietary system of Orthodox Jewry. This is based on the Mosaic law as originally recorded in certain texts in the books o Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The prohibition: 'You shall not boi a kid in its mother's milk', occurs first i

Eve's Dinner Party

But I will haste and from each bough and brake,
Each Plant and juiciest Gourd will pluck such
choice
To entertain our Angel guest, as he
Beholding shall confess that here on Earth
God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heav'n.
So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order, so contriv'd as not to mix
Tastes, not well joined . . . fruit of all kinds,
in coat,
Rough or smooth rin'd, or bearded husk, or shell
She gathers, Tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand; for drink the Grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meathes
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulcet creams . . .
A while discourse they hold;
No fear lest Dinner cool; when thus began
Our Author. Heav'nly stranger, please to taste
These bounties which our Nourisher, from whom
All perfect good unmeasured out, descends,
To us for food and for delight hath caus'd
The Earth to yield . . .
So down they sat,
And to their viands fell, nor seemingly
The Angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
Of Theologians, but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate; what redounds, transpires
Through Spirits with ease; nor wonder; if by
fire
Of sooty coal th' Empiric Alchimist
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn
Metals of drossiest Ore to perfect Gold
As from the Mine. Meanwhile at Table *Eve*
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crowned . . .

John Milton *Paradise Lost*


שה לבית אבת: ולקחו מן הדם ונתנו על שתי המזוזות: צלי אש



Exodus 23.19. Like all these Jewish dietary rules, this has been interpreted and elaborated by Rabbinical scholars: it is still taken to mean, in practice, that milk may not be drunk, or butter eaten or used in cooking, at a meal at which meat is eaten; and strictly *kosher* restaurants would refuse to serve a glass of milk if it were ordered at such a meal. More specific detail about permitted and forbidden foods is given in Leviticus, chapter 11 and Deuteronomy, chapter 14. The orthodox are allowed to eat beasts which are cloven-hoofed *and* cud-chewing, such as the ox, sheep and goat, but not to eat beasts which are cloven-hoofed but not cud-chewing – the swine – or cud-chewing but not cloven-hoofed – the camel, coney and hare. Finny and scaled fish may be eaten, but not shellfish. Eagle, raven, owl and many other birds are forbidden, but 'clean fowls' are permitted. Winged insects that 'go upon all fours' are forbidden, except for 'those which have legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth'; the locust and the cricket however are allowed.

Kosher (that is 'fit' or 'proper') meat is not only the flesh of one of the permitted categories of animals: it must have been killed by approved methods, which involve draining all the blood from the body. No animal which has died naturally may be eaten. Indeed – a clear parallel with the taboo customs of other cultures – anyone who merely touches or carries the carcase of such an animal 'shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the even.'

These dietary laws were instituted, according to Jewish authorities, 'for reasons of hygiene and the avoidance of idolatry.' Many non-Jews also regard them as sensible safeguards in a hot climate. This is so; but there is clearly no hygienic need for their continued observance in cool climates, and with modern refrigeration. This survival is valued by Orthodox Jews as a symbol and reminder of the earliest traditions of their race and of their special calling as Yahweh's chosen people. Non-Jewish anthropologists would see it rather (examining it objectively, and without any trace of anti-semitism), as an example of the tenacious hold on the human consciousness and practice of primeval taboos even when they have long ceased to have any practical relevance.

Sir James Frazer, analysing the Jewish taboo on the pig, remarks that (in pre-Christian centuries) 'the attitude of the Jews to the pig was ambiguous'. He goes on to say: 'The Greeks could not decide whether the Jews worshipped swine or abominated them. On the one hand they might not eat swine; but on the other hand they might not kill them. And if the former rule speaks for the uncleanness, the latter speaks still more strongly for the sanctity of the animal . . . we must conclude that, originally at least, the pig was revered rather than abhorred by the Israelites. We are confirmed in this opinion by observing that, down to the time of Isaiah, some of the Jews used to meet secretly in gardens and eat the flesh of swine and mice as a religious rite . . . And in general it may perhaps be said that all so-called unclean animals were originally sacred; the reason for not eating them was that they were divine.'

Forbidden Flesh

There are striking similarities between the dietary laws of Judaism and those of another great religion that has grown and spread in Asia, Africa and elsewhere – Islam. The Koran forbids 'only that which dieth of itself, and blood, and swine's flesh.' The traditions and sayings of Mohammed supplement these injunctions: animals are unlawful food unless slaughtered by a method similar to that of the Jews, also if slaughtered by an idolater or an apostate from Islam.

Food can become unclean for a Moslem by contact with unclean persons or things. It is recorded that one extremely strict Moslem was away from home and his wife was busy, when their baby began to cry: to quieten him, a young woman who was visiting gave her breast to the baby. The father came in, snatched the baby from her, and held it upside down to drain out any of her milk, for fear it might be tainted if her observance of the dietary laws were less scrupulous than his own.

In general, however, the strictest observance of such taboos in Islam and Judaism, as in other religions, is nowadays tempered in practice with common sense. Wine is forbidden in the Koran, but most non-Moslems who have Moslem friends have known some of them to indulge, at least in private, in a glass of wine or beer. A Moslem prominent in public life will not do this in a public place; and few of these are so fortunate as a former Aga Khan – hereditary spiritual leader of the Ismaili community – who was able to drink as much champagne as he liked since by miraculous dispensation it turned to water as it passed his lips. Even a comparatively lax Moslem, however, while sharing a bottle of wine at dinner, will scrutinize most carefully any stew or soup set before him, to satisfy himself that it contains no fragment of flesh of the forbidden pig.

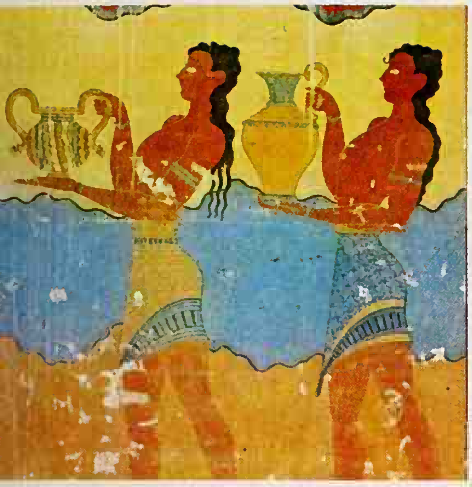
Whether Frazer's theory of the origin of the dietary taboos of Judaism and Islam applies to the domestic animals which are kept as pets in many countries, especially in Europe and America, is a matter for speculation. Cats, which were venerated in ancient Egypt, receive almost comparable attention from their owners in these Western countries, and dogs probably receive even more. These are modern versions of totemism: both animals are taboo as food and so are eaten only at times of extreme necessity, as during the siege of Paris in 1870 or the siege of Madrid in 1936.

Eating the God

Certain attitudes, it seems, are common to both 'savage' and 'civilized' man, although in the more advanced societies a refined and often impressive symbolic ceremonial replaces the crude brutalities of primitive ritual. The devout Christian invokes Christ as the 'Lamb of God' and shares in a sacred meal; and this meal, however elevated the thoughts and emotions of those partaking of it, has something in common with the primitive tribal practices of which Fraze writes in the section of the *Golden Bough* entitled 'Eating the God'.

Indeed Catholics insist that the centra action of the Mass – the sacrament o Christ's body and blood – is not merely a 'spiritual' or memorial rite, and that th

Above **The stages of initiation into the cult of Dionysus are shown in this fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii: Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and intoxication, was the object of frenzied devotion and secret ritual** ***Opposite left*** **Part of a procession of sacred vessel-bearers from the Palace at Cnossus, Crete** ***Right*** **The Egyptians were concerned that the deceased should have an adequate supply of food and drink in the after life, lest they be forced to feed on their own excrement: mural of food-bearers from the Tomb of Nakht**



F. H. C. Birch/Sonia Halliday

Michael Holford

onsecration by a priest of the elements of read and wine brings about such a change n them that Christ himself is *really* present n the altar. So, after the consecration of the read and the wine, those who approach the ltar or pass before it bow the knee in hom- ge to the divine presence; and when they hare in the Communion – consuming token ortions of the consecrated elements – they ill thereby be strengthened and purified. No atholic will agree with the scepticism of the oman orator Cicero, who sneered at the acraments of the corn god and the wine god. When we call corn Ceres and wine Bacchus, e use a common figure of speech; but do ou imagine that anybody is so insane as to elieve that the thing he feeds on is a god?'

Cicero anticipated the unbelief of modern humanism; but the age-long instinctive consensus of mankind is against him. When the Christian missionaries arrived in Mexico and in India, they found that the ancient local religions had their rites of transubstantiation: in Mexico, the pagan priests turned bread into the true body of their god; in India the Brahmins taught that the sacrificial rice-cakes were changed by the priests into actual human flesh.

But why is there this almost universal belief in the sacramental principle that real values can be conveyed through material instruments and, in particular, that this principle reaches its highest expression in a meal at which a divine entity – a totem animal, a god or a substitute for a god – is solemnly eaten by the worshippers?

There could be many explanations of the phenomenon. Freud followed Darwin in thinking that the first society – like that of the higher apes – was a 'primal horde' led by a violent chief or father, jealously possessing all the women and eventually killed by the strongest of the younger males. Later came the totemic clan, in which 'the totem animal is really a substitute for the father'; the totem animal was taboo – but on special occasions its killing and eating strengthened the clan's sense of kinship with it. (See also numerous articles, including BREAD; CORN; HARVEST; MASS; TABOO.)

TOM DRIBERG

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he privileged position of the fool, the clown and e jester allows him a wide latitude for satirical mment on sacred institutions. By provoking ughter and bringing suppressed anxieties to the urface, he often plays a therapeutic role

OOL

HREWD MEN of all times and places have retended folly or madness as licence for ocial satire: the fool of ritual, court and tage, whatever his type, is no fool. Some ypes of fools have been jesters; others have npersonated fearsome supernaturals. The esters were sometimes unfortunates who rovoked laughter by their infirmities as ripples, idiots or dwarfs, but more usually ney excelled in agility and intelligence. The ncient Egyptians for instance imported warfs from Central Africa – pygmies who ere acrobats and clowns – and the Aztec uler, Montezuma, engaged acrobatic clowns amuse his court.

The heyday of the medieval fool came fter the Crusades. Sometimes a superior ester was permanently attached to a court, ke John Heywood in the retinue of Henry III and Kunz von der Rosen in the cortège f Maximilian I of Austria. Sometimes he andered about, like Till Eulenspiegel of ermany, Italy's Bertoldo, Turkey's Nasa ddin, and India's Muladeva, all famous its of history and legend.

In the Middle Ages buffoons would travel n foot or occasionally in style with a patron's following. Clever buffoons could dance, turn cartwheels, juggle, sing and compose satirical verses. Some had a company to enact the burlesques. The majority were men, but an occasional female acrobat impersonated Salome, or groups of girls accompanied gleemen, as dance partners for trained bears.

The fools of the Renaissance (thought to be descendants of the Roman mime) provided entertainment during banquet interludes and during intermissions in the vast spectacles of the 17th century English, French and Italian courts. In Elizabethan masques they played roles as professional dancers. In elegant mythological pageants and in tragic dramas they provided interludes of relaxation comparable to the comic relief in Shakespeare's tragedies. After the decline of European courts, they moved to the professional stage, as characters in the *commedia dell' arte* and later became the tragi-comic figures of ballet productions – not only Harlequin but also Punchinello, Scaramouche and Pierrot.

The Fool in Folk Drama

A ritual fool plays a symbolic role in a number of British folk plays associated with Morris dances, sword dancers and mummers. Whether he wears tatters or motley, a fool's many coloured dress, the fool climaxes his clowneries in a symbolic death and resurrection.

In Christmastide dramas there emerge the central figure of the Fool or Medicine-Man, and his group of assistants who, disguised with black faces, form a secret society, of which he himself is the head. His 'act' is to suffer death in order that the community shall survive. His 'sons' (the members of the secret society) have to kill the head of the house, their 'father'. While he acts this sacrifice he visits the underworld, taking with him all the accumulated evils, burdens and difficulties of the past year. When his task is done he returns a revived leader, to resume his earthly responsibilities fortified for a new year.

An example of an English folk play in which the Fool plays a chief part was recorded at the end of the 18th century in the village of Revesby in Lincolnshire. The Fool has six sons, played by sword dancers, who plan to kill him. The Fool plays for time but eventually submits to the inevitable, is slain and falls dead – only to spring up again, claiming that he still has another life. The complicated sword dance pattern leading up to his death is repeated and the Fool is killed a second time. The sons lament the father whom they have killed, who once again revives and recounts his experiences out of the world. The Fool and his eldest son then vie for possession of the Lady (a man-woman); the Fool wins her and the performance ends with the actors joining in a final dance.

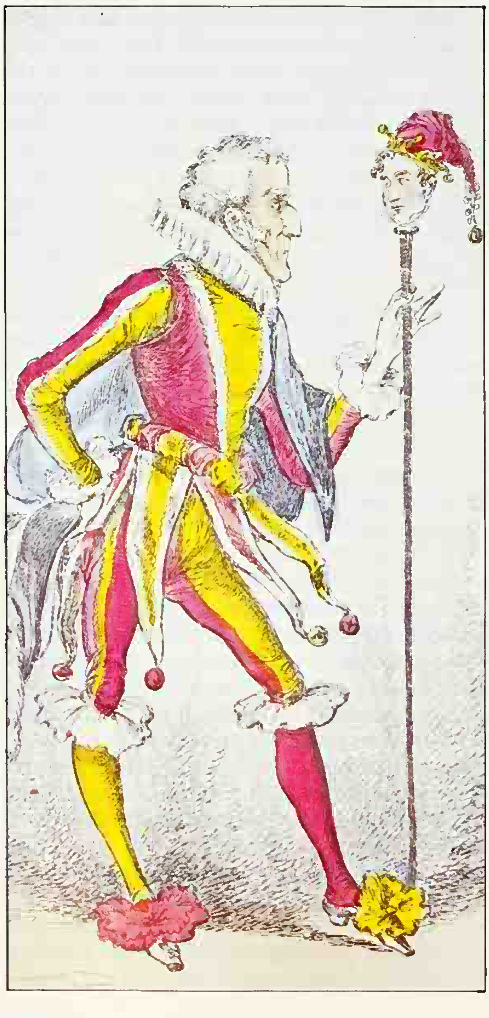
At times the Fool is associated with animal impersonations. He may wear a fur cap, a tail, and a bladder. He is dressed in skins, as leader of a company pulling a decorated Fool Plough on Plough Monday, usually the Monday after Epiphany, before ploughing begins.

In other European festivals the Fool skips about in human guise, with groups resembling Morris dancers, such as the Basque *Mascarades*, and the *Schäfflertanz* of Munich. Or he leads a company of uncouth dancers in animal masks, the *Bugios* (monkeys) of the Portuguese *Mouriscada*. On St John's Day at Sobrado in Brazil the Fool-Leader, wearing church vestments, rides into town backwards on a pony, sowing flax. He harrows, then ploughs with an upside-down yoke. During the battle between the Bugios and an orderly array of Mouriscos he is captured, but the Bugios recapture him with the aid of a dragon, and then the demons join their conquerers in saintly dance.

In the Austrian Alps, at Midwinter, shaggy creatures leap to promote the year's growth of crops – the *Schemen* of Imst, the *Huttlerläufer* and the *Zottler* of the Tyrol and the *Perchten* of Salzburg. They enact a battle with a troupe of victors in high, flowered hats. These masqueraders cavorted in medieval carnivals. Before that, they celebrated pagan vegetation rites, the Perchten as impersonations of the ghosts in the deity Berchta's train.

A cloven-hoofed, underworld deity became the devil of medieval lore, miracle play, and carnival, and he still capers and clowns in Iberia and Catholic Latin America. He is sooty, red or green, has horns and a harpoon tail, and wields a pitch fork. He is ushered in by fireworks, smoke and a sulphurous stench. Groups of devils dance elaborate quadrilles in Catalan carnivals.

Cartoon of the Duke of Wellington as the Lord of Misrule, by William Heathy: in the Middle Ages the Lord of Misrule held court each year for a brief period and conducted the Christmas festivities


John Webb

Mexican Demon-Clowns

In Mexican carnivals the devils may be in the company of a skeleton and comics masked as native tigers, turkeys or goats and bulls. During the Yaqui Indian Easter fiesta in the Sonora region, three men in black, bearded masks leer and caper. The *Pascolas* (old men of the fiesta) are ritual hosts; they use exorcism gestures, dance without masks and amuse the crowd with obscene raillery.

During the same Easter fiesta, the Chapayekas, members of a votive clown society, impersonate demons and enact parodies, wearing long-nosed, long-eared, horned, hairy masks of goatskin. During Good Friday processions they stamp, wriggle their hips, rattle their belts of deer and goat hooves and clatter wooden staves. On Easter Sunday they burn their paraphernalia, destroying the malignant powers.

The Chapayekas appear related to clown societies of tribes north of the border – thus, in New Mexico, the *chapio* of Acoma and Laguna Pueblos, the *tsaviyo* of San Juan, the *k'apio* of Taos.

The tsaviyo of Pueblo Indians are also called *abuelos* – grandfathers – when they perform with the *Matachines*, relatives of the Morris men. With long whips they tease a Torro, a boy wearing the hide and hair of a bull, kill, quarter and revive him. Their attire varies from ordinary clothes to cowboy outfits, from rubber masks to hide masks recalling the Chapayekas.

Some tsaviyo are eerie rather than funny. On the eve of December 21 the white tsaviyo appears from the hill east of San Juan. He belongs to the winter moiety, the group of clans in charge of winter ceremonies for animals. He wears white hide trousers and a white kilt, moccasins, and hide mask. He has a fox fur collar, mica earrings, ear flaps, eye slits, and frosted hair. On December 22 the black tsaviyo of the summer moiety, the group whose responsibility it is to manage the crops, appears in a natural-coloured hide costume, yellow moccasins, and a black mask similar to the white tsaviyo's. Both have come from Truchas Peak, in the mountains, hence the frosting. They whisper in Spanish falsetto.

On December 23, just before dusk, both come out to make the people sweep the plazas. Dance officials go to the head of the town, below the cemetery, to meet the tsaviyo. 'Whitie' jumps and walks counterclockwise through the north plaza, around to the winter chief's house. He strikes his whip on the *nansipupinge*, a sacred stone pile symbolic of the earth centre, and the town's ceremonial centre, before entering the house. The summer 'blackie' goes clockwise by way of the south plaza to the summer chief's house west of the house block, and he strikes the ground with his whip. They enter the house of each chief and are welcomed to the town, before retiring to the sanctuary. Their ritual directions are significant, counterclockwise around the north for the winter, and clockwise around the south for the summer.

Other ritual clowns such as the *Koshare* of the Keresan tribe, and the *kosa* of the Tewa weave among dancers or act parodies. They represent spirits of the ancestors and arrive from the east where the dead are reborn. These clowns wear the ghost markings, black and white stripes on their bodies, white or black rings about the eyes and mouth, and a black, ragged apron. Traditionally, their poked head-dress was used in mankind's emergence from the earth, to bore a hole for exit. During rain and corn dances they bounce and gesticulate on the side lines They are beyond censorship and may enact satire of sacred institutions, of the Catholic Mass, of tourists. Sometimes they discipline initiates or frighten spectators. Yet their first purpose is to amuse the people, as their name, 'the delight makers', indicates.

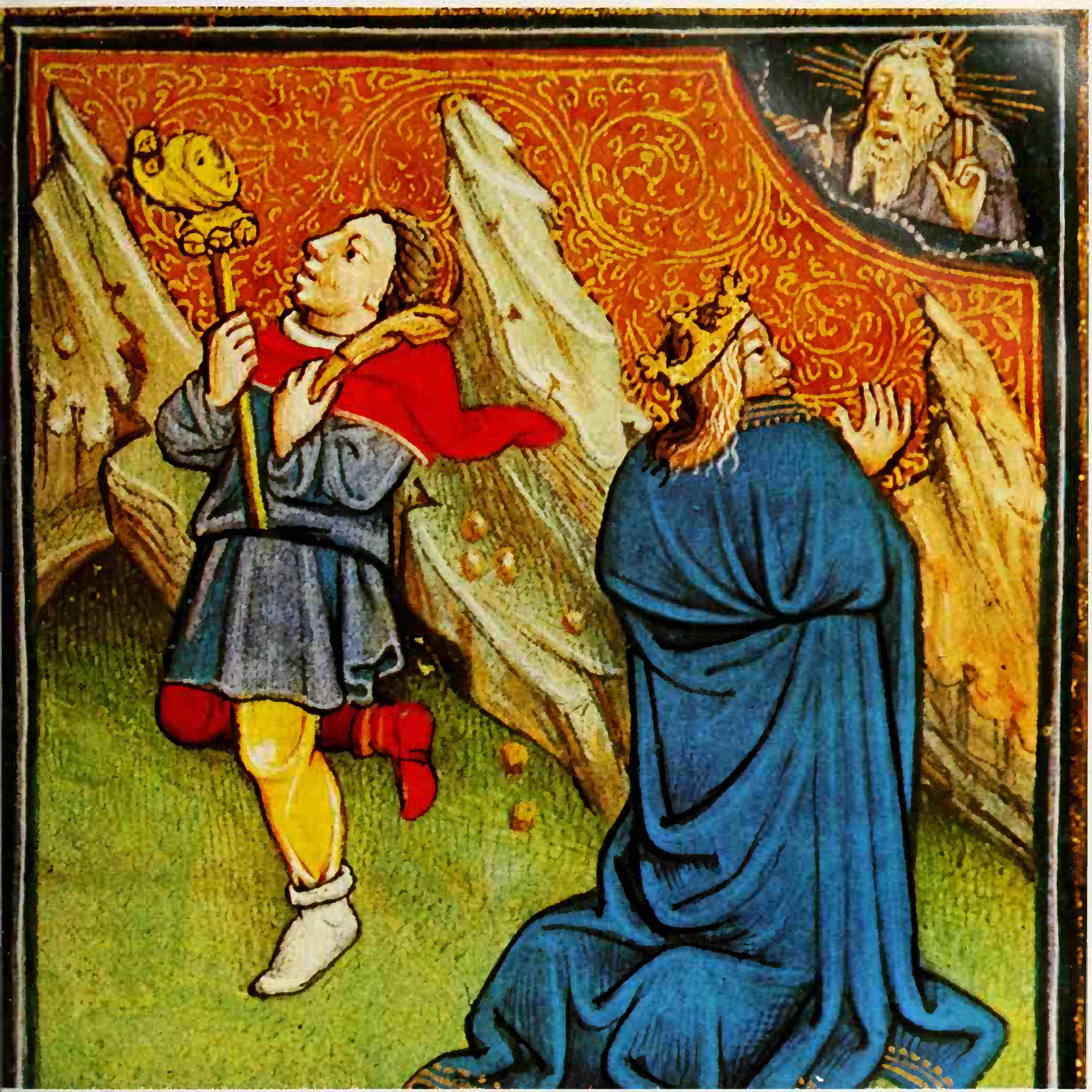
Other tribal comics enact preposterous roles. In western New Mexico, the mud covered *Koyemshi* of the Zuni eat filth and engage in obscene interludes between masked dancers. They symbolize the spirits of the dead. In Arizona the Hopi god o death, war, fire and night, Masauwu appears in a huge mask and performs al natural actions in reverse.

Maskers of the Great Plains

The Crow Indians of the Northern Plain have a society of fools who use mud for bod paint and smear their cloth masks wit charcoal. They ridicule whatever they wish they fall down, pretend to die laughing and engage in obscene behaviour. In the 'hot dance of the Dakota tribe, the *heyok* immerse their arms in hot water and complain that it is cold. In breechclouts and white paint, they represent the god Haoka stretching to giant height or crouching t dwarf size. The *windigokan* of the adjacen Bungi act foolishly in obedience to a drear of the thunder god. They burlesque warrior during ceremonies, wearing long-nose sackcloth masks; they used to handle coal or hot water.

In the east, humpbacked *haduhi* of th Iroquois effect cures by means of ashe and grotesque dancing. They amuse and terrify the spectators in their big ceremonies at Midwinter. At the Onondaga ceremonies near Syracuse, New York, thes False Faces sometimes wear their traditional black or red masks of basswoo Sometimes they put on ridiculous costume and stone masks, to parody their ow sacred rites for the bear or eagle spirits. I female garb one man burlesques the sacre food-spirit dance of the women.

To the south, in North Carolina, th Cherokee 'boogers' enact more ribald an caustic Midwinter satire. Each man select a character for ridicule and an appropriat mask of wood or gourd, to represent foreigner – German, Spaniard, Southerner or growling bear. Some carry an imitatio phallus under a quilt or sheet and the expose it to women and girls. Frank Spec in *Cherokee Dance and Drama*, emphasize their boisterousness: 'The maskers a systematically malignant. On entering, som



f them act mad, fall on the floor, hit at the pectators, push the men spectators as hough-to-get-at their wives and daughters, nd chase the girls toward the crowded valls'. During a round dance they engage in rotic display. In the course of their solo cts they give vent to suppressed aversions oward white men, as living beings or ghosts. They used to have magic powers for cure hrough their association with ghosts.

Release Through Laughter

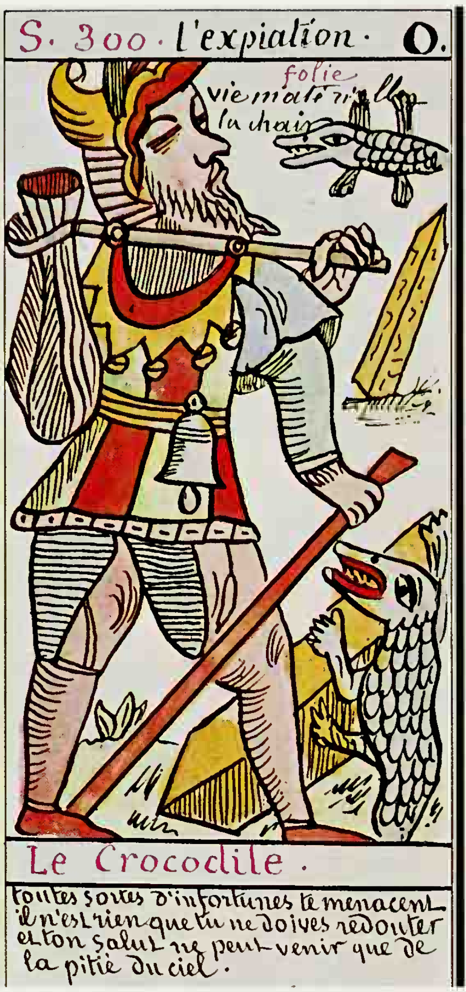
Satire, social or personal, appears as a niversal function of the fool, from the European court jester to the Cherokee ooger. In other parts of the world laughter ermits and releases pent-up indignation. The pygmies parody rites imposed by Negro tribes. The African Azande poke fun at individual foibles. Korean comics imitate a headman and clerk in ragged modern suits. Similarly, in the Mexican carnivals, fools imitate city people and tourists; buffoons in ragged suits harass photographers.

Taboos and repressions find a vicarious outlet in the phallic play of fools. Outside Europe the sex play may be as overt as the lewdness of the ancient satyrs. Papuan clowns make passes at women spectators; clowns of the Crow Indians enact a form of copulation between a male actor and a man dressed as a woman.

Jesters, sometimes dwarfs or cripples, but more usually clever men who could dance, sing and compose satirical verses, held privileged positions at medieval courts: 15th century MS from the British Museum

The chthonic or underworld function is related to the reverse behaviour, the backwards actions and speech, the progression contrary to the customary circuit, as in death rites. It is also expressed in elements of costuming; black and white stripes, black and white diamond design, or face whitening (the mark of the modern circus clown and of the mime, Marcel Marceau); or blackening with soot, at one time obligatory for all Morris dancers. The soot is especially potent, because of its derivation from purificatory fire.

Plant potency is symbolized in the foliage of England's Leafy Fool, the Green Man (see GREEN). Animal potency remains in


S. 300 · l'expiation · 0.
folie
vie matérielle
la chair
Le Crocodile.
toutes sortes d'infortunes te menacent
il n'est rien que tu ne doives redouter
et ton salut ne peut venir que de
la pitié du ciel.

Right The Fool, the first of the major trump cards from a French Tarot pack: a symbol of holy madness, he stands for the Nothing which contains the potential existence of all things *Far right* Fools can be sad as well as funny: a melancholy circus clown

horned masks and shaggy or tattered clothes. The court jester's outfit with the horned fool's cap is similarly derived.

Suppressed fears of ghosts or other malignant spirits come to the surface in the grotesqueries of Europe's Dances of Death, the Koshare, and the African *Widah* spooks; in the demonic drolleries of the Bugios, the devil, and the Tibetan demons.

Often the demons also cure diseases, as in India, Ceylon and in the Iroquois False-Face ceremonies. But generally the fools are not frenzied shamans. Their therapy is mental rather than physical, and it is through their fantastic comedies that they bring anxieties to the surface. By inducing laughter they may avert any violent expressions of indignation and anxiety in their audience.

(See also DANCE; DANCE OF DEATH; FOLK-PLAYS.)

GERTRUDE KURATH

FURTHER READING: Elsie C. Parsons, *Pueblo Indian Religion* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1939); Frank G. Speck and L. Broom, *Cherokee Dance and Drama* (Univ. of California Press, 1951); E. Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (Faber & Faber, 1968).

FORCES

THE CLASSICAL GODS and goddesses ruled the life of men and of Nature and controlled certain, not always very clearly defined, spheres of influence or departments of life: Mars as the ruler of war, for example, or Mercury as the god of trade and commerce. The European magical tradition, which has its roots in pagan antiquity, also classifies the phenomena of the world in terms of the powers which control them, though these powers are no longer thought of as gods but as impersonal forces or currents of energy which are at work behind the surface appearance of things (see also CORRESPONDENCES).

In popular astrology the planets, which are named for Roman deities whose characteristics have powerfully influenced the astrological nature of each planet, cause events on earth and influence the personalities of men. They are traditionally the forces which cause events or, from a more modern point of view, their positions in the sky provide evidence of the way in which the governing forces of the universe are at work. Similarly, numerologists classify human characteristics and all the other phenomena of the world in terms of nine basic forces or 'vibrations' which correspond to the numbers from 1 to 9 (see ASTROLOGY; NUMEROLOGY).

Much modern occultism, influenced by cabalistic magic, is based on the idea of ten basic forces, the sefiroth of the Cabala's Tree of Life (see CABALA), which are linked with 'spheres' and numbers. The spheres come from the medieval picture of the universe, which was generally accepted until the 16th century and which saw the universe as a construction of concentric spheres, fitting one inside each other like the skins of an onion. The outermost sphere belongs to God, the next to the fixed stars, the next seven to the planets known in antiquity (the stars which move), and the innermost sphere to Earth. It is through these spheres that the soul must climb on its way back to God after earthly death, and through them too that the magician hopes to climb on his way to knowledge and power.

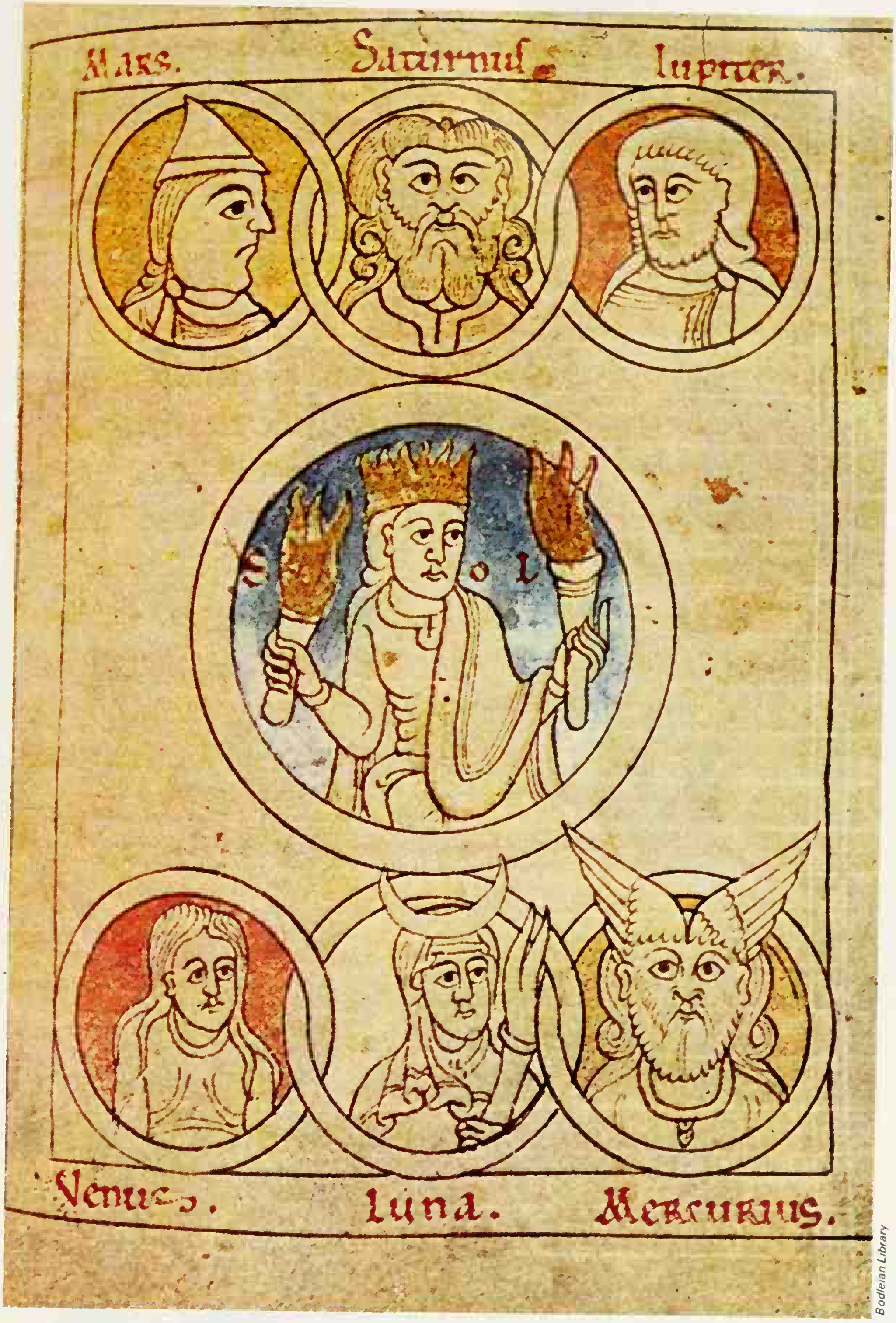
Although occultists no longer regard this picture as an accurate diagram of the construction of the heavens, they accept it as a secret and spiritual reality, as the pattern or design which exists behind all outward appearances. The sefiroth, planetary spheres and numbers correspond as follows:

Number	Sefirah	Sphere
1	Kether	God
2	Hokhmah	Fixed Stars
3	Binah	Saturn
4	Hesed	Jupiter
5	Geburah (or Din)	Mars
6	Tifereth	Sun
7	Netsah	Venus
8	Hod	Mercury
9	Yesod	Moon
10	Malkhuth	Earth

These correspondences, with their wealth of classical, cabalistic, astrological and numerological associations, provide the clues to the nature of the great driving forces of the universe, to the way in which the universe evolved, and to the ladder which leads from man to God.

Briefly, the *first* sphere is the force of God as First Cause, as Prime Mover, as the Unity behind all diversity, and the soul which reaches this sphere reaches God. It unites and reconciles the opposite qualities of the second and third spheres, which are respectively active and passive. The *second* sphere is the active principle in God and in the universe, the Father, the force which causes all action, change, growth, evolution. The *third* sphere is the passive principle, the Mother of all things, the force behind everything which is negative rather than positive, potential rather than actual, stable rather than changing. Hokhmah is what acts, Binah is what is acted upon. Binah is linked with Saturn, the planet of fate and time, the inevitable and eternal, and the energy of Saturn as ruler of death is the force which magicians attempt to tap in operations of death (see DAYS).

The next two spheres are those which govern evolving life and are again opposites. The *fourth* is the force which constructs and organizes, corresponding to Jupiter, seen as the benevolent ruler and organizer of gods and men: the *fifth*, Geburah, is the force which destroys and disorganizes. In the human body, for instance, Hesed is said to



In popular astrology the planets, named after Roman deities and influenced by their characteristics, are traditionally the forces which cause events on earth and influence the personalities of men: 12th century English manuscript showing the planets

Bodleian Library

lie behind the building up of food into tissue, Geburah to lie behind the breaking down of tissue in the expenditure of energy. Geburah corresponds to Mars, the planet of violent destructive energy, inspirer of hatred, cruelty, havoc and war, and the force appealed to in magical operations of hatred and violence.

These two opposite forces of construction and destruction are reconciled and joined in the *sixth* sphere of Tifereth and the sun: the sun which nourishes animals and plants with the constructive energy of Hesed and which also withers them with the destroying force of Geburah. This is the sphere of the life-force, of vital energy, of the drive which compels all things to cling to survival.

The next three spheres again constitute two opposites and their reconciliation. The *seventh* is the force which lies behind the senses and passions, love and desire, nstincts, automatic and unthinking reactions. It is the sphere of the animal man as opposed to the civilized man, of the natural as against the contrived, of the full-blooded as against the inhibited, of impulse as against thought. The *eighth* sphere belongs to the force of intellect, reason, logic, considered reactions, ingenuity and of what are to magicians the highest abilities of the mind – nspiration, imagination, intuition. The two are balanced and united in the mysterious *ninth* sphere of the moon, the shadowy depths of the personality where each man's true self lies concealed, and of the magical power of the true self which springs from the combination of a man's highest mental faculties with his animal drives.

Finally, the *tenth* sphere of Malkhuth and Earth is 'the whole kingdom of God'. It unites and contains the forces of the whole Tree, as the number 10 contains those from 1 to 9, and also restates the number 1 (God) on a different plane.

FURTHER READING: Dion Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah* (Weiser); R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Capricorn, 1968).

CHARLES FORT

WHEN CHARLES FORT'S *The Book of the Damned* was published in New York in 1919, he declared: 'I am a pioneer of a new kind of writing that instead of heroes and villains will have floods and bugs and stars and earthquakes for its characters and motifs.' Most critics did not know what to make of it. 'I am a collector of notes upon subjects that have diversity,' he wrote, 'such as deviations from concentricity in the lunar crater, Copernicus, and a sudden appearance of purple Englishmen.'

Although *The Book of the Damned* was obviously a radical critique of contemporary science, it was in an unprecedented style – fragmented, argumentative and imaginative, it was by turns compassionate, violent, poetic, ironic and wise. It was also hilarious. Fort was lauded by the cream of America's writers. Booth Tarkington found the book 'vigorous and astonishing' and revelled in the author's 'gorgeous mad-man's humour'. 'Here indeed' he said, quoting Blake, 'was a "brush dipped in earthquake and eclipse"'. Ben Hecht wrote a review of the book in the *Chicago Daily News* in 1919. Fort, he said, 'has made a terrible onslaught upon the accumulated lunacy of fifty centuries.... He has shot the scientific basis of modern wisdom full of large, ugly holes.' Hecht went on to coin the word, now used to describe an open-minded study of the widest range of anomalous phenomena: 'I am the first disciple of Charles Fort,' he said. 'Henceforth, I am a Fortean.'

A brief selection from Fort's writings would include such topics as spontaneous human combustion; unidentified flying objects; discoveries of America before Columbus; lights on the Moon; stigmatic wounds; 'mass hysteria' and panics; rains of stones, blood, or animals from the skies; people with paranormal abilities; wolf children and wild men; teleportations and poltergeists; sea serpents; and modern human artefacts exhumed from ancient rocks.

Fort went on to write three more books of encyclopedic diversity – *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931) and *Wild Talents* (1932) – in which he developed an objective viewpoint which was both constructive and capable of philosophical rigour.

Far from being a credulous man who would 'believe anything', Fort cut at the very roots of credulity. Tentative acceptance, he thought, was more fruitful than belief. The difficulty of Fort's thesis wrongfooted the American press, who erroneously dubbed him 'the archenemy of science'. Fort's real target was scientific malpractice and blind dogma. His cynicism arose from observing how scientists argued for and against various theories, facts and kinds of phenomena according to their own beliefs, rather than the rules of evidence. He was appalled at the way any datum that did not fit a particular scientist's view, or the collective paradigm, was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite a different thing from explaining). He called such rejected data 'The Damned' because they were excommunicated by a science that acted like a religion.

In *Lo!*, Fort called science 'the conventionalization of alleged knowledge'. His statement that 'nothing, in religion, science, or philosophy...is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while,' compares with Karl Popper's, that 'every scientific statement must remain tentative forever. It may indeed be corroborated, but every corroboration is relative to other statements which, again, are tentative.'

'Science has done its utmost to prevent whatever Science has done,' wrote Fort, pointing out that Voltaire scorned the notion of fossils; Lavoisier delayed the acceptance of meteorites for forty years when he told the Academy of Sciences in 1769 that only peasants believed that stones fell from the sky, because, 'there are no stones in the sky'; spaceflight was considered 'utter bosh!' in the 1930s; and so on. Today we see old herbals plundered for new pharmaceuticals and the practices of witchdoctors for new therapies. Fort observed: 'Witchcraft always has a hard time, until it becomes established and changes its name.'

The Concept of Continuity

The reductive thrust of modern science – to define, divide and separate the phenomenal – went contrary to the observed nature of phenomena, Fort reasoned. In its place he proposed the notion of 'Continuity', a universal condition in which everything is in an intermediate state between extremes. This is summed up by Martin Gardner in his *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science*: 'Because everything is continuous with everything else, it is impossible to draw a line between truth and fiction. If science tries to accept red things and exclude yellow, then where will it put orange? Similarly, nothing is "included" by science which does not contain error, nor is there anything "damned" by science which does not contain some truth.'

Like the Chinese, Greek and other ancient schools of philosophy, Fort had notions of the universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena. 'One measures a circle, beginning anywhere,' he wrote at about the same time that the hapless Paul Kammerer was occupied with the related concept of meaningful coincidences he called 'seriality'. Both ideas prefigured the Jung-Pauli thesis of 'synchronicity', which Jung described as an 'acausal connecting principle'. Fort's idea of Continuity, however, was far more comprehensive; for instance: '... there is continuity between what is called the real and what is called the unreal, so that a passage from one state to the other is across no real gap, or is no absolute jump.'

'An Utterly Peaceable Man'

Charles Fort was born in Albany, New York state, on 6th August 1874, to a fairly prosperous family of Dutch immigrants. Escaping home at the age of 18, he spent a year as a journalist before hitch-hiking through Europe. In 1896 he contracted malaria and returned to New York, where he was nursed by Anna Filing, an English servant girl in his father's house. They married, to be separated only by Fort's death.

According to his biographer Damon Knight, Fort 'was...an utterly peaceable and sedentary man [who] lived quietly with his wife.' They settled in the Bronx to twenty years of dire poverty, sometimes having to break chairs for firewood. Beside his journalism, Fort wrote ten novels, only one of which – *The Outcast Manufacturers* (1906) – was ever published. He read every scientific book and journal he could find and amassed 25,000 pages of notes on the infallible public face of orthodox science. These he burned because 'they were not what I wanted'. He resumed what he called his 'grand tour', through the world's major newspapers and scientific journals, taking notes in a cramped shorthand on small squares of paper filed in shoe boxes.

In 1916, when he was 42, Fort's luck turned – he came into a modest inheritance from an uncle, which was just enough to relieve him of the worry of earning his daily bread – and he began work on what became *The Book of the Damned*, which Dreiser bullied his publisher to put out in 1919.

The following year, in a fit of depression, Fort again burnt his notes, and in 1921 set sail for London, where he and Anna lived near the British Museum. For eight years he took his 'grand tour' in the museum's library. He came to the conclusion that space travel was inevitable, and sometimes spoke on the subject at Hyde Park Corner.

During this period he wrote his least successful and most cranky book, *New Lands* – largely a satirical attack upon the pomposity of astronomers, who, he said, were 'led by a cloud of rubbish by day and a pillar of bosh by night.' In 1929 he returned to New York and began work on *Lo!*. A year later he completed his last book, *Wild Talents*, which dealt with occult or psychic abilities revealed during progressive blindness and weakness. On 3 May 1932 he was admitted to hospital, where he died within a few hours. He took notes to the end – the last one said simply: 'Difficulty shaving. Gaunt places in face.' He left 60,000 pages of notes, now in the New York Public Library.

In 1931, a year before his death, Dreiser, Tiffany Thayer and Aaron Sussman had founded the Fortean Society, which Fort refused to join. He had expressed his objection to such an organization: 'The great trouble is that the majority of persons who are attracted are the ones we do not want; Spiritualists, Fundamentalists, persons revolting against science, not in the least because they are affronted by the myth-stuff of the sciences, but because scientists either oppose or do not encourage them.'

Nevertheless, the Society enjoyed much success in its early years. Beside Dreiser, Hecht, Thayer, Sussman and Tarkington, members included Clarence Darrow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Havelock Ellis, John Cowper Powys and Alexander Woolcott. Thayer, its secretary, championed ever crankier ideas – such as a flat Earth – and opposed others like fluoridation of water supplies, and the Society, with its journal *Doubt*, petered out with his death in 1959.

Fort was one of the main influences upon the developing study of UFOs, not least because such writers as Eric Frank Russell and Vincent Gaddis were original members of the society. Gaddis was writing articles about mysterious craft and lights in the skies well before the term 'flying saucer' was coined in 1947. Thirty years earlier, Fort had collected notes on lights and objects seen dancing, speeding and hovering in the skies. He wondered then if they were alien vehicles or 'super-constructions' as he called them, or if some might be unknown forms of natural phenomena.

Teleportation

In *Book of the Damned*, Fort coined the term 'teleportation', which he saw as a primary force which distributes, instantaneously, matter, objects and life forms throughout the Universe. He was aware of the phenomenon of 'apports' (objects that materialise in the seance room) and felt that this related in some way to reports of the things mysteriously transported or projected through the air during 'hauntings'.

In the beginning, he speculated, teleportation was extremely active, but as life and matter became more evenly distributed among inhabitable worlds, the need for such a force lessened. Eventually, it became vestigial, functioning erratically.

Teleportation could account for the sudden appearance of animals far from their usual habitats, or the appearance of fish in a freshly-dug pond. The teleportive force might also occasionally come under human control: poltergeist phenomena, levitation, bilocation or psychokinesis could perhaps occur consciously. Many of these ideas were seized upon by American science fiction and fantasy writers.

Today oddity reports are mostly absent from the scientific journals – where Fort found most of his data – and are used as small filler paragraphs in the newspapers, written inaccurately and for laughs. Fort's work is continued in the USA by the International Fortean Organization (founded 1966), and in the UK by the magazine *Fortean Times* (founded 1973).

ROBERT RICKARD

(See COSMIC JOKER; PSYCHOKINESIS; UFO; etc.)

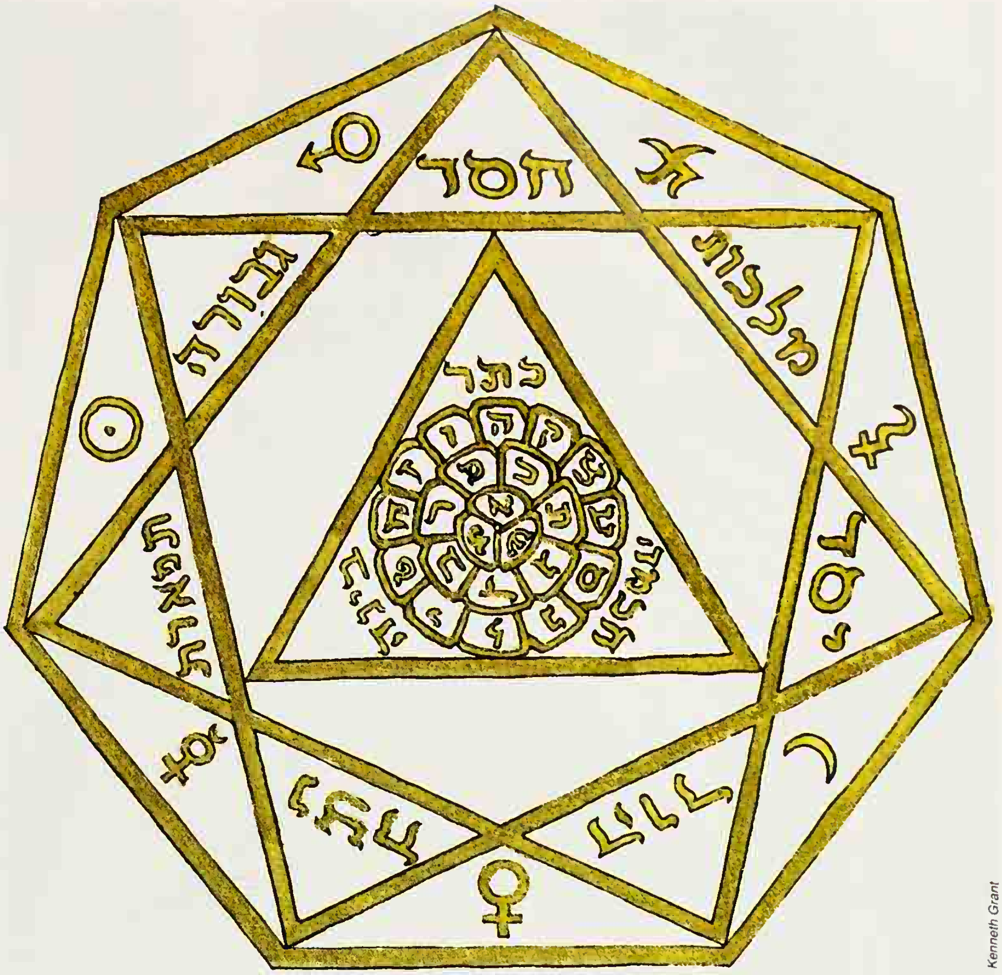
A terrifying psychic experience led Dion Fortune to become a truly original writer on the dark and hidden aspects of the mind

DION FORTUNE

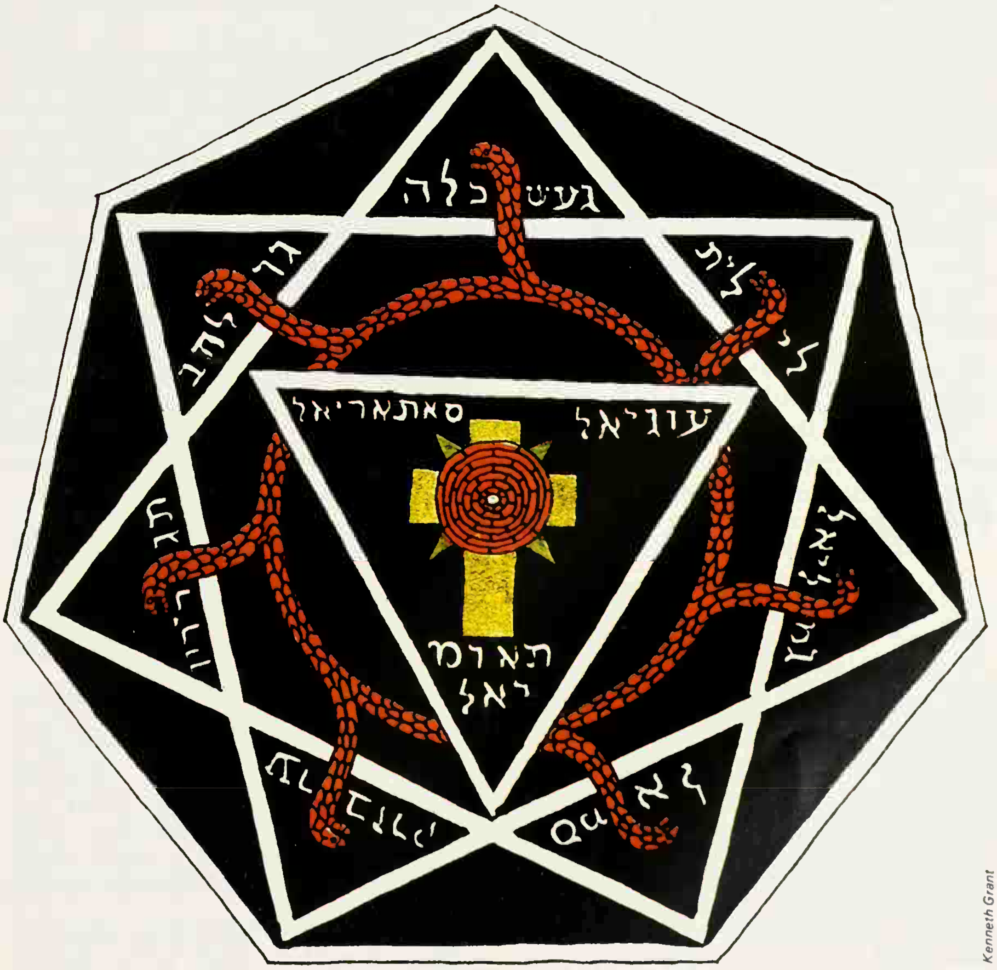
OCCULTIST, PSYCHOANALYST and novelist, Dion Fortune – whose real name was Violet Mary Firth – was born in 1891 and died in 1946. At a very early age she showed signs of extreme sensitivity to people and places and it soon became evident that she possessed strongly developed psychic faculties. Brought up in a Christian Science household, her marked independence of spirit and penchant for prolonged day-dreaming caused much anxiety. The power of imagination plays a great part in occultism, and in later years she learnt to make use of reverie, properly controlled and directed, in the kind of occultism she was to teach and practise.

When she was about 20 years old, Violet Firth suffered a traumatic experience which determined the course of her life. It occurred while she was working at an educational establishment. Her employer, the principal, was a domineering, unscrupulous woman of a particularly malevolent disposition, who had studied the techniques of yoga for many years in India. When Violet unwittingly antagonized her, she responded by attacking her with a form of yoga resembling hypnosis, perverting the process so as to produce destructive emanations. The attack left the girl shattered in mind and body. 'It was this experience which led me to take up the study of analytical psychology, and subsequently of occultism,' she wrote in her most characteristic book, *Psychic Defence* (1930), a study of the abuses of occult power and the ways in which the victim can protect himself. Violet Firth first trained as a Freudian psychoanalyst and throughout her life retained a strong interest in psychology, publishing several books on the subject under her own name. 'As soon as I...watched the dissection of a mind under psychoanalysis, I realized that there was very much more in the mind than was accounted for by the accepted psychological theories'; it was in order to understand these unexplained aspects that she originally took to occultism.

The terrifying contact with an undoubted practitioner of black magic was also the starting point of her later researches into ways and means of combating mental interference and domination by one person, or group, over another. She learnt how to diagnose and counteract the most insidious kinds of psychic attack; and soon developed and mastered the ability to travel in her astral body, to extrude her etheric double, to scry in the spirit vision and similar practices of operative occultism (see ASTRAL BODY; DOUBLE; SCRYING). It was not until she



Kenneth Grant



Kenneth Grant

Above right **and** ***Right*** **Drawings by Steffi Grant of the ground and ceiling plans of the Vault of the Adepts of the Golden Dawn. Dion Fortune believed that her initiation into this occult society had healed her of the damaging effects of a 'psychic attack'**

Helios Book Service

The only known photograph of Dion Fortune

was initiated into an esoteric society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, that she was fully healed from her encounter with evil forces. She claims that initiation sealed her damaged etheric body, which since the time of her experience had been leaking energy like a broken vessel. In the Golden Dawn she applied herself systematically to the study and practice of magic, and emerged a fully fledged occultist. Her own group – The Fraternity of the Inner Light – was founded in the 1920s and is still in existence.

Under the assumed name Dion Fortune she wrote widely on the occult, her most important book being *The Mystical Qabalah* (1935); much of her material was related to Aleister Crowley's researches in the sphere of magical correspondences and symbolic affinities. Towards the end of her life these two adepts, both of whom were intent upon reviving the ancient mysteries exchanged a number of letters (see CORRESPONDENCES; CROWLEY).

Like many occultists, Dion Fortune also used fiction as a vehicle for her ideas, well aware that she could disseminate truths otherwise incommunicable to uninitiated minds. Her novels are mainly concerned with the lives of ordinary people who, in the course of their experiences, become so disillusioned through sorrow or suffering that their minds are forcibly turned inwards. This introversion taps the memories of previous incarnations; the individuals thus gain insight into the purpose of their present lives and are able to act accordingly.

Black Isis

Two novels, *The Sea Priestess* (1938) and *Moon Magic* (published posthumously in 1957) throw a great deal of light on her magical personality. In them she relates the history of a priestess of Isis who comes to restore paganism to a world that has lost touch with the elemental forces that make life truly dynamic. But it is not the Isis of simple unregenerate Nature, or primal emotional and sensual pleasure, but the power of the Black Isis, the primordial and elemental essence of Woman in her power aspect. Mated to its complement in the male stripped of the accretions of civilization by the realization of inherent divinity, this power is capable of effecting profound transformations in human consciousness.

Black Isis embodies the *sakti* (power) that destroys all that is inessential and obstructive to the soul's development. It is the power that liberates the spirit of man from the confines of limited experience. The basis of Fortune's practical work involves the bringing through into manifestation of this sakti, by the magically controlled interplay of sexual polarity. This is embodied in the priest, or consecrated male, and the specially chosen female. Together they enact the immemorial Rite and form a vortex in the ether, down which the tremendous energies of Black Isis rush into manifestation.

Dion Fortune believed that her work would form a nucleus enabling the ancient Temple mysteries to operate once more. She was, indeed, a priestess of the Western esoteric tradition, the ground plan of which is the Tree of Life which forms the subject of *The Mystical Qabalah*.
(See also GOLDEN DAWN.)

FURTHER READING: Dion Fortune, *Psychic Self Defence; Applied Magic; Sane Occultism* (Aquarian Press, London, 1967); *The Mystical Qabalah* (Weiser); fiction: *Moon Magic; The Sea Priestess* (Weiser, 1981); see also publications of the Society of the Inner Light.

FORTY

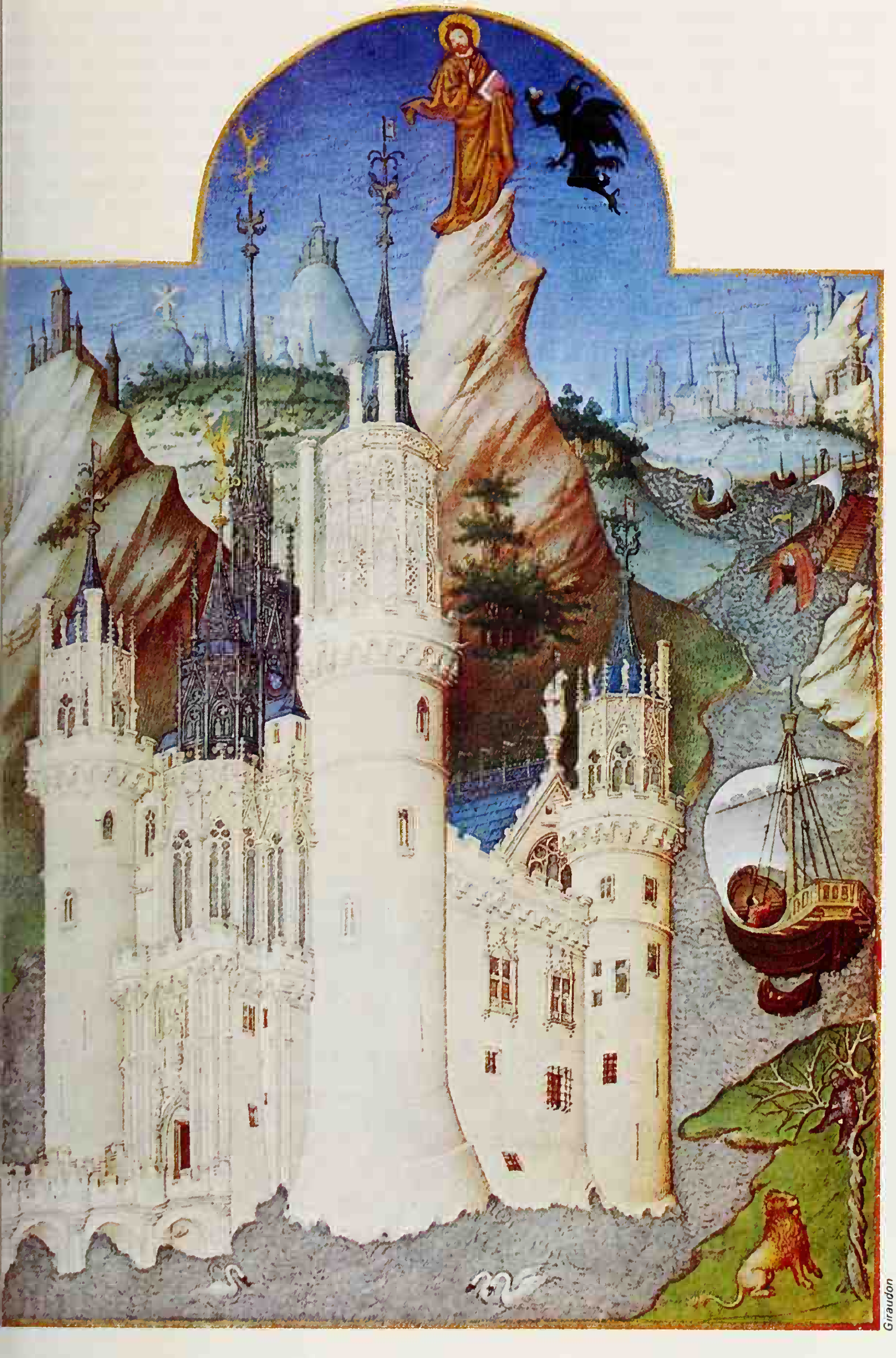
THE NUMBER FORTY has been sacred and mysterious to peoples as far apart in time and place as the ancient Babylonians and the modern Inuit. The forty days rain that follow rain on St Swithin's day, the original meaning of the word quarantine, and proverbial sayings like 'Life begins at forty' are all survivals of ideas and beliefs prevalent in the ancient Near East, where the fundamental associations of the number were with weather, health and hygiene.

The Babylonians attached a very special significance to forty, and called it *kissatum*, meaning 'the excellent quality', which they understood as an expression of fullness, and the universe conceived as a totality. The number was sacred to Ea, the god of sweet waters and also the supremely intelligent god. Forty was the number of offerings to the gods at important festivals in Babylon, and at Nineveh the regular period for mourning and fasting was forty days.

Probably under the influence of Babylon, other ancient Semitic peoples regarded forty as a sacred number, and right down to modern times the Mandaeans, a religious sect living in the Shatt al 'Arab, have preserved rituals connected with forty which are specifically Babylonian in origin. Among the Hebrews the sacred numbers were at first twelve and forty.

After seven, forty is the most frequently mentioned sacred number in the Old and New Testaments, as it is in the Talmud. The earliest association of the number forty was with days, and the association with years and finally with objects came later. In Genesis 7.12, the rain which causes the Flood lasts forty days and forty nights, and in Exodus 34.28 this is the time Moses spends with God on Mount Sinai. In the New Testament, Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness at the time of his temptation. The children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, and it was the period for the desolation of Egypt.

Applied to things, forty denotes a large or impressive number. Among many examples in the Bible could be quoted forty kine, the forty sockets of silver in the construction of the Tabernacle, forty camels' burden, forty



The Temptation of Christ: Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness, during which time he was tempted by the Devil

Giraudon

shekels of silver, and lengths of forty cubits.

The number forty from ancient times had a special importance in pregnancy and childbirth. In Leviticus 12.1-4, the rule is laid down that a woman is unclean for forty days after giving birth to a male child, and during this period is not allowed to touch a hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary. This seems to be linked with the notion, prevalent among many ancient peoples, that human pregnancy lasted 280 days (seven times forty) and that forty-day phases were of particular importance in the development of embryos, young animals and even plants.

According to Aristotle (384-322 BC) it was believed that the fortieth day was the day on which the male child stirred in the womb for the first time; this was already an ancient belief in his day. The followers of Pythagoras (6th century BC) had a well-developed theory about the forty-day phases of pregnancy, according to later authors. They celebrated the safe passing of the fortieth day, for which they had a special name, regarded the fifth forty-day period as the time during which the foetus began to move down, and the sixth, from the two hundredth to the two-hundred-and-fortieth day, as the most critical.

The belief that women are unclean for forty days after childbirth is found in many parts of the world even today, and was held by the Babylonians, the Israelites and (as a 2nd century BC inscription from Lesbos shows) by some at least of the ancient Greeks. According to ancient Greek notions, the first forty days also marked a phase in the life of a new-born baby: Aristotle remarks that children do not smile or shed tears until they are forty days old.

From this particular connection with pregnancy and childbirth, the forty-day period took on a general significance for health and hygiene. It was a critical period, according to Hippocrates and other Greek medical writers, in the development and treatment of certain diseases, and this belief survived long enough to make quarantine – as the word itself indicates – originally a period of forty days.

The phases of certain stars also contributed to the belief that forty was a sacred number. The Greek poet Hesiod (8th century BC) says that the Pleiades – a constellation which loomed large in the imagination of all ancient peoples – disappear for forty days each year. The association of the phases of the Pleiades with changes in the weather, taken in conjunction with this observation, probably accounts for the ancient and very widespread habit of making rules about agriculture, fishing, sailing and hunting based on forty-day periods. The tradition that the Flood lasted forty days and forty nights derives from this astronomical lore, and in turn may have led to the frequent association of the period of forty days with mourning fasting, penitence and atonement.

A Drink for the Dead

The idea of forty-day cycles in the weather has been perpetuated in many superstitions – for instance that the weather on Ash Wednesday will 'rule' the weather for the next forty days, or that if it rains on 1 June it will rain for forty days and nights.

These ill-omened associations of the number forty may account for the belief, especially prevalent in Slav and neighbouring countries, that the soul of a dead person continues to dwell on earth for forty days. In these countries it was the custom until quite recently to place a jug of water beneath the icons in the house for forty days after the funeral, and to inspect it daily to see if the dead person had drunk any. Another possible motivation behind these customs was the belief that the first forty days after death were peculiarly significant in the same way as the first forty days after birth.

To philosophers of the great Pythagorean and later schools, the purely arithmetical properties of the number forty may also have played a part in its sacred history; but there is no evidence that such mathematical speculation ever entered the mainstream of folk traditions, in which the forty sons of Abdon the Pirathonite, the forty martyrs of Sebaste, the forty thieves of the Arabian Nights, the 'forty summers that besiege thy brow', and the forty days and forty nights of Christ's temptation in the wilderness are all part of a unified whole.

(See also NUMEROLOGY.)

The Romans believed that gods and goddesses, divinely descended heroes and the celebrated twins, Romulus and Remus, all played a part in the founding of Rome

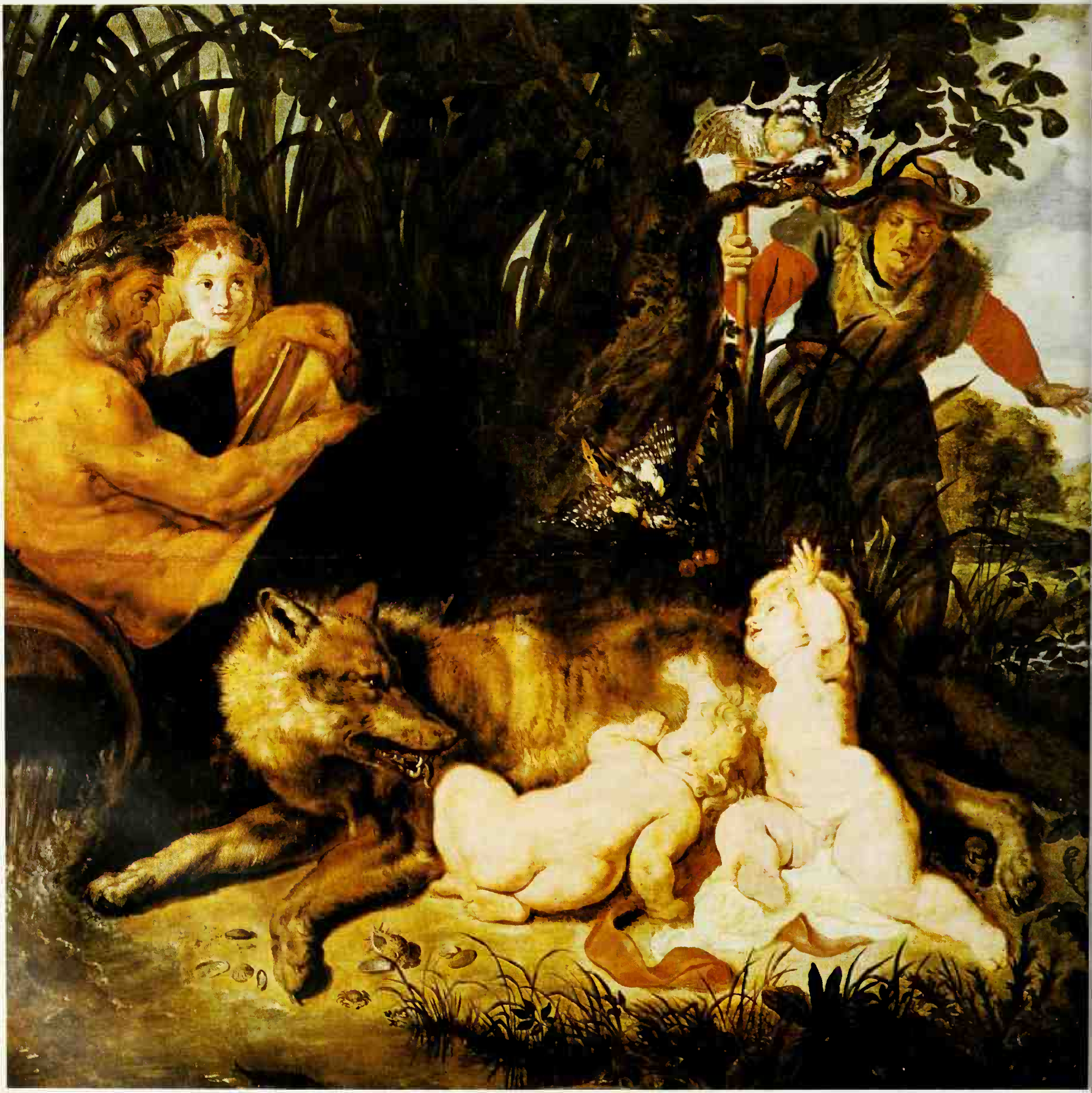
FOUNDING OF ROME

THE NAME OF AENEAS, the Trojan warrior who is first mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, is linked in legend with the foundation of Rome. In the *Iliad* Aeneas's mother, the goddess Aphrodite, and the god Poseidon predicted that his heirs would rule over the Trojans in great glory; thus of all the Trojans only Aeneas was assured of survival after the Greek conquest. The figure of Aeneas also belonged to the series of legends on the wanderings of heroic warriors after the Trojan War. Because of the incidence of towns and other coastal landmarks which anciently bore names similar to his, Aeneas became the archetype of the wandering refugee who founded cities. The most remarkable of his postwar exploits were his visit to Carthage and a contribution to the beginnings of Rome, whose Italian empire was destined to fulfil Aphrodite's prophecy of the Trojan's enduring dominion. The legend of Aeneas's activities in the western Mediterranean is far older than Virgil's epic poem the *Aeneid*, which was published after the poet's death in 19 BC.

In this poem Aeneas flees from the sacked city of Troy in the company of his son Ascanius and his aged father Anchises. After many adventures Aeneas reached Italy where various sites were connected with his visits and dedications. Aeneas strengthened his band of Trojan followers by a dynastic marriage with the native princess Lavinia, whose father Latinus offered land to the Trojan and shared his kingship with Aeneas.

In some accounts Aeneas is represented

The mythical founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were cast adrift on the river Tiber, rescued by a she-wolf and reared by her: Rubens' painting of the baby twins *Opposite* An early 15th-century plan of Rome from the Duc de Berry's *Book of Hours*

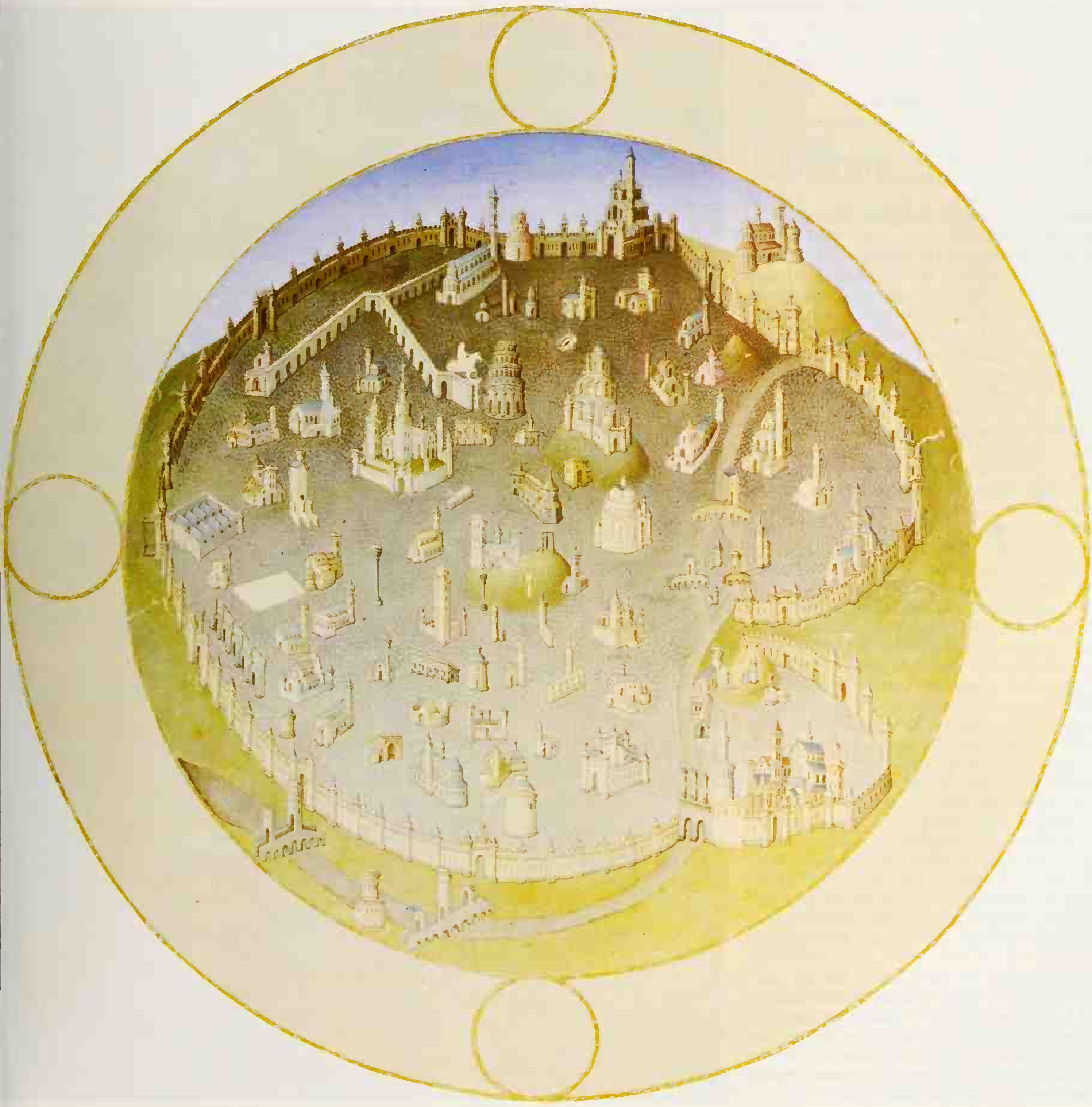


visiting the place which would later hold the city of Rome founded by his descendants. However, Aeneas himself never played an actual role in the foundation. Before the Romans began to investigate and record their origins there already existed two reports of the relationship between Aeneas and his descendant Romulus, who according to the older reckoning was the grandson of Aeneas. The accepted date of the destruction of Troy as around 1200 BC and the tradition of the foundation of Rome as c 753 involved both Greek and Roman scholars in a chronological discrepancy. This they solved by creating a dynasty of kings, usually named *Silvii*, who ruled over the people of the ancient Latian city of Alba Longa.

According to the literary tradition of the Silvian dynasty, Amulius deposed his brother, the rightful king Numitor, and consecrated his niece, Rhea Silvia, to the goddess Vesta so that she would remain forever childless. The maiden was loved by Mars and she conceived and gave birth to twins who were exposed to die. They were borne along by the Tiber and brought to land near the site of an archaic Roman shrine, the Lupercal and its neighbouring holy fig tree, the *Ficus ruminalis*: both landmarks play an important role in the legend of the twins. Although the literary devices of the tale bear the marks of a Greek legend, it also bears unmistakable traces of Roman invention by its attention to well-known local landmarks. The names of both Romulus and Remus refer to places: Rome itself and Remoria or Remona, evidently an old name of the Aventine Hill. Indeed Romulus itself means no more than 'Roman'.

Wolf-Mother or Wanton?

The Lupercal was a grotto at the foot of the Palatine Hill attached to the cult and ceremonies of the two old religious fraternities of *Luperci*, the *Fabiani* and *Quinctiales*, who annually purified persons and places during the festival of *Lupercalia* on 15 February. In consequence of the linguistic derivation of Lupercus from *lupus*, 'wolf', the Romans believed that a she-wolf had suckled the newborn twins. The suckling itself was suggested by the



Musee Conde de Chantilly/Giraudon

Ficus ruminalis, the name of which was thought to have come from an obsolete word for teat and the verb *ruminare*, 'to chew'. In fact, the manifest sense of the fig tree's variant names, Romula and Romularis, and the obsolete name of the Tiber river, Rumo, demonstrate that the sense of ruminalis was 'Roman'. In any event, the story of the wolf and the twins was already well established in 296 BC when two Roman magistrates dedicated a statue group of the three at the Lupercal.

A later rationalization of the tale attempted to suppress the unlikely animal by reinterpreting the wolf as a *lupa*, the common Latin designation of a whore. In this account the twins are discovered by the shepherd Faustulus who entrusted them to his wanton wife, Acca Larentia. A minor goddess, she was worshipped at her shrine in the place called Velabrum, also situated at the foot of the Palatine Hill.

Marking the Boundary

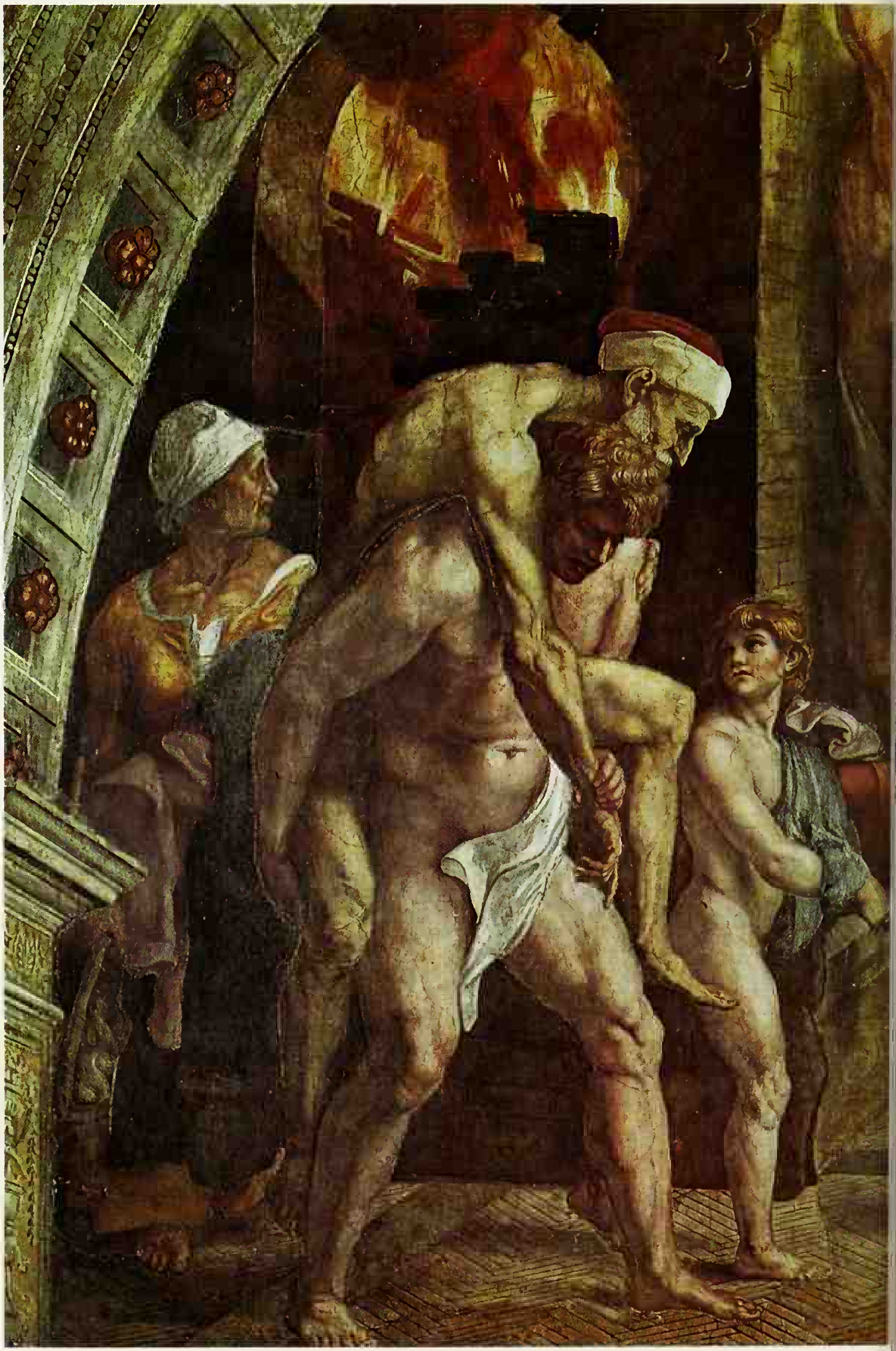
Reaching manhood among Faustulus and his fellow shepherds, Romulus and Remus assumed the leadership of a band of cattle-rustlers who plundered the territory of the usurper Amulius. Caught and brought before the deposed Numitor, Romulus and Remus pleaded so eloquently and regally that their identity became known to their own grandfather. Thus reunited and aware of their rightful inheritance, the twins overthrew the usurper and restored their grandfather. Yearning for their old haunts and impatient of waiting their turn at the Alban kingship, they returned to the place where the waters of the Tiber had once set them down. In the tradition of Alba Longa as the mother-city of Latian towns, they led a proper Alban colony to found a new city on the site. The brothers quarrelled over the colony's location and name and decided to seek a sign from the gods to settle the matter (see AUGURY). Remus took his place upon the Aventine Hill and Romulus upon the Palatine, and both watched the heavens for a sign. To Remus first appeared six vultures, but twelve vultures flew into Romulus's line of vision. In this fashion the god Jupiter indicated to the colonists the site and name of Rome.

Romulus himself drew the sacred boundary of the city which the Romans called a *pomerium*. The manner of marking the boundary was to plough a furrow with a team of a cow and a bullock. The plough had to be lifted over the place of each gate. The cow was yoked on the inside of the boundary, apparently to invite fertility within the city, and the bullock on the outside, to keep sterility beyond the town's boundary. Romulus forbade his brother to leap the boundary, a magical act evidently bringing ill-luck and in the most frequent version, himself slew Remus who taunted the founder by leaping over it.

Romulus's foundation was *Roma Quadrata*, 'squared Rome', a formal colonial settlement on the Palatine Hill which does in fact yield the oldest traces of continuous habitation at Rome. Romulus divided his colonists into three major divisions called tribes and these again into 30 subdivisions, the *curiae*. Traditionally, the three tribes represented the ethnic constituencies of Latins, Sabines and Etruscans, while the 30 curiae served the gods of the common people and were also military units of the primitive army. The usual treatment of the foundation relates that the first Romans numbered 300 cavalrymen and 3000 foot soldiers. The features of the foundation legend are entirely drawn from the Romans' experience of later colonization in Italy.

Romulus reigned long and well, leaving a much larger kingdom than he had founded. One day while performing some public act in the Campus Martius – the field of Mars – he ascended into heaven and joined the gods. Later a certain Julius Proculus announced that he had seen Romulus, who told him that he had become the god Quirinus. This apotheosis of Romulus is closely connected with the cult of Mars (see MARS).

It was Mars who fathered the twins on the Vestal Virgin and it was from the Campus Martius that Romulus ascended to heaven. In addition the name of Numitor seems cognate with a title of Mars, 'Numisius'. The word *Quirinus* was

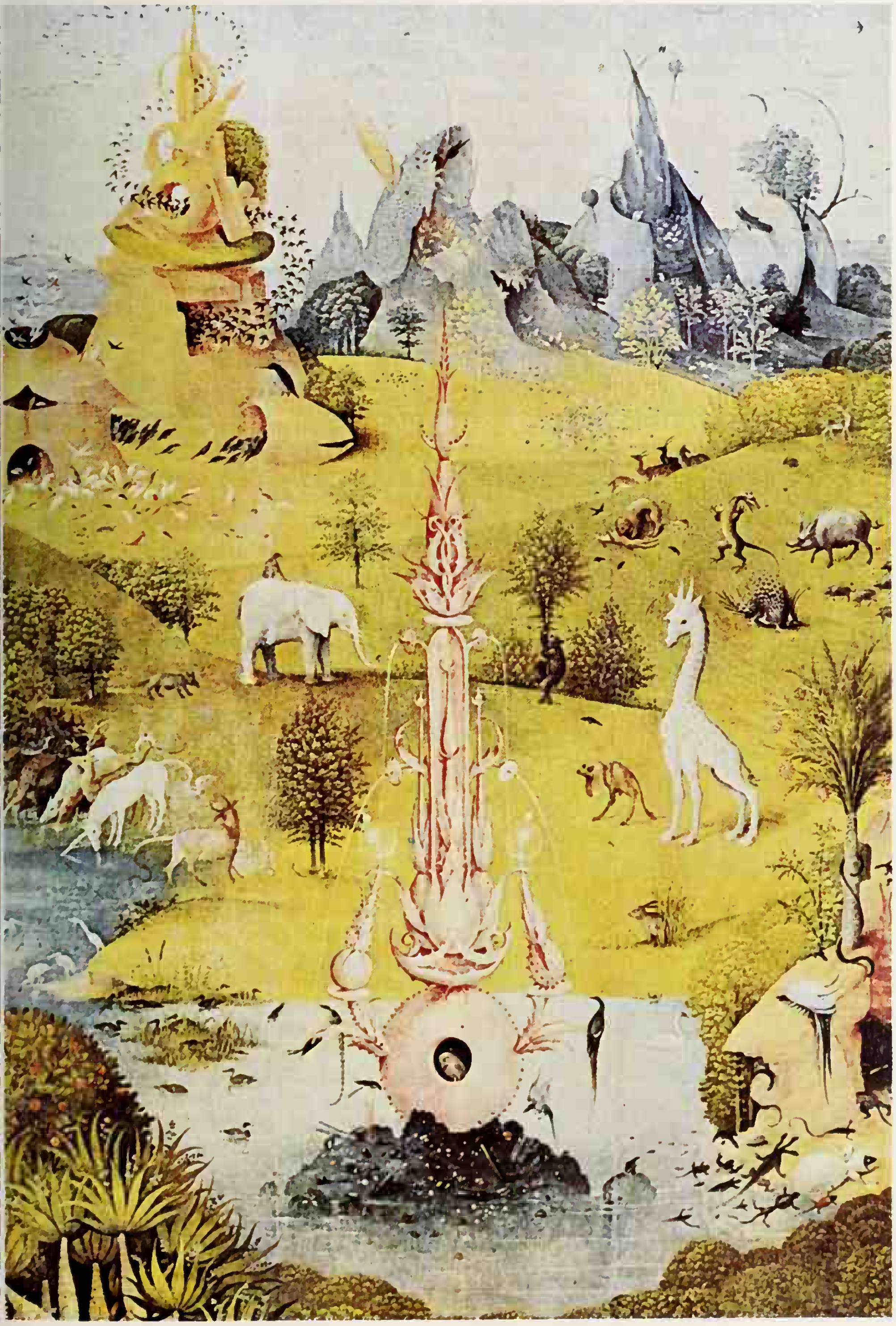


In the legends that gave birth to the epic poem the *Aeneid*, the Trojan warrior Aeneas, ancestor of the future founders of Rome, escaped from the holocaust of Greek-plundered Troy accompanied by his son Ascanius and carrying his aged father Anchises on his back to safety: detail from a fresco designed by Raphael commonly a cult-title of at least two Roman gods, Mars and Janus. It probably comes from *curia* and thus means 'of the (Roman) *curiae*'. Apparently in no case did a founder who had given his name to the city enjoy an actual cult at Rome. Rather, the Romans chose to see in Mars Quirinus the figure of their founding father. The festival of Quirinus *(Quirinalia)* fell on 17 February, just two days after the festival of Lupercalia.

Romulus's divine appearance to Julius Proculus belongs to the ancestral pretensions of Rome's Julian clan. The surname Proculus is related to the fiction of the Silvian dynasty of Alba which had a king Proca or Procas. The Julii clan claimed that through their ancestor Iullus, another name of Aeneas's son Ascanius, they were directly descended from Aeneas and Venus. The clan, though patrician, had not maintained a continuously dominant position among the vigorous and long-lived Roman aristocracy which for centuries controlled Roman politics. Hence their pretensions to divine and heroic ancestry complemented the Julii's eclipsed history and family position. In this framework Gaius Julius Caesar had created a third confraternity of Luperci called after himself, since the other two archaic ones bore designations related to other patrician families. On the occasion of the Lupercalia in 44 BC Mark Antony, serving as a Julian Luperus, offered Caesar the diadem of a king. It is this event which Shakespeare portrays in his *Julius Caesar*. Finally, both Caesar and his adopted son Octavian fostered the cult of Venus Genetrix, Venus the Ancestress. Indeed when Octavian became emperor he adopted the preferred honorific title 'Augustus' rather than 'Romulus'. Augustus also restored the architectural embellishments of the Lupercal. Both Caesar and Augustus proudly bore the title Father of the Fatherland which had a significance peculiar to their clan alone.

R. E. A. PALMER

FURTHER READING: Livy, *History of Rome* (in the Loeb edn); Plutarch, *Lives* trans E. Cary; vol I contains a chapter on Romulus (Heinemann, 1914); Virgil, *Aeneid* trans C. Day Lewis (Hogarth Press, 1952).



As the springhead of living waters, source of fruitfulness and life, fountains have been seen as the haunt of virgin nymphs and as bestowers of youth and wisdom

FOUNTAIN

AUTHORS IN ANTIQUITY were often at pains to stress the difference between fountains and springs, which are living and natural sources of water, and cisterns and wells, which are man-made stores of motionless water. To the modern mind, there is an obvious distinction between the two, but one which depends on mere physical qualities rather than divine or magical attributes of moving water.

Water which moves, glistens, and makes audible sounds is regarded in primitive thought as either living or inhabited by animate spirits. These spirits were gradually made more and more personal, until in the Old Testament we find this essentially pantheistic conception of the fountain assimilated into Jewish monotheism: in the book of Jeremiah, the Lord says, 'My people have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters', and more than one prophet alludes to the Messiah as a fountain which shall come forth.

Fountains are symbols of life itself, but more specifically they represent the source of fertility, the 'water of life'. The ancient Greeks peopled their springs with nymphs, and the original meaning of that word is 'nubile maiden'.

A typical Greek nymph myth is contained in the story of the huntsman Alpheius, who fell in love with Arethusa, a hunting maiden. She refused his advances, and took refuge in the little island of Ortygia in front of Syracuse harbour, where she was transformed into a fountain of fresh water. In despair, Alpheius turned himself into a river, but he still loved Arethusa as desperately as before, and so he sought a

In Hieronymus Bosch's painting *The Garden of Delight*, a fantastic fountain, symbol of life itself, gushes forth in the paradisal setting of the Garden of Eden: Old Testament prophets sometimes referred to the Messiah as the fountain which shall come forth

Michael Holford

way under the sea until he reached Ortygia, where he mingled with the water of the fountain.

The Greeks, and other ancient peoples, attributed miraculous fertilizing powers to some fountains. There is a spring which still flows at a village on the eastern outskirts of Athens where, according to Ovid, childless wives were taken in the belief that a drink of the sacred waters would cure them of sterility. The association between fountains and the bearing of children is found in more than one symbolical passage in the Old Testament, and a man's wife is referred to as his fountain in Proverbs: 'Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth.'

Fountains are the source of youth and rejuvenation and belief in a fountain of youth is world-wide. One Red Indian myth describes how it was created halfway between earth and heaven by two buzzards but was later destroyed for bringing only pain and grief to those who drank of its waters, as they outlived their children and their friends.

A Spanish writer of the last century says that long before his time a great many Indians travelled from Cuba to Florida in search of the fountain of youth, and rumours of its existence even attracted some travellers from Spain.

According to a Japanese legend, the white and yellow leaves of the wild chrysanthemum bring blessings from the fountain of youth, where Kiku-Jido the chrysanthemum boy dwells. The leaves were ceremoniously dipped in *sake*, the Japanese liquor that reputedly gives men health and a long life.

In mythology, fountains have been accredited with other powers besides that of conferring fruitfulness and everlasting youth. At Argos in Greece, the goddess Hera became a virgin again each year by taking a dip in the fountain of Kanathos. A similar idea underlies a Teutonic myth, which shows a strange blend of pagan and Christian beliefs. The shaggy wood-wife Rauhe Else came on all fours to the sleeping hero Wolfdietrich, begging his love. He agreed, on condition that she would be baptized. She carried him off to her own land, where she bathed in the fountain of youth, and was transformed into the lovely maiden Sigeminne.

Symbol of the Soul

One way that Christianity came to terms with pagan beliefs in the miraculous powers of fountains, springs and wells, was to transfer their guardianship to a saint, who now performed his own miracles making use of the revered waters.

Fountains have been regarded by many races as sources of wisdom. In an ancient Celtic myth the seeker after wisdom is drowned in a holy fountain, and in more than one Irish legend fountains are associated with the mysterious salmon of knowledge who gives advice to the hero. In Norse mythology, the god Odin goes to the fountain of the Nature spirit Mimir, in which wisdom and cunning lie hidden. There he asks for a drink, in exchange for a few sips of which he must pay the price of one of his eyes as a sacrifice to the fountain.

Some modern writers have sought to trace back these various mythological associations with the fountain to deeper underlying concepts. It has been remarked that in gardens, courtyards and cloisters, the fountain usually occupies a central position, and this has been linked with the idea of the four rivers which, in many mythologies, issue forth from the centre of the earthly paradise. From this observation that the fountain usually occupies the central point, some writers have drawn the conclusion that the fountain should be considered as a symbol of the soul as the source of inner life and spiritual energy, and ultimately of individuality itself.

Jung suggests that the fountain is a mother symbol and he also links it with the 'land of infancy', interpreting it as a symbol for that area of the unconscious which is responsible for the individual's moral behaviour patterns.

In mythology the fountain is not the formal construction of the kind found in courtyards and cloisters. It is essentially moving, living and natural water and there may be no need to look further than these characteristics to 'explain' the various myths and symbols that have grown up around the fountain

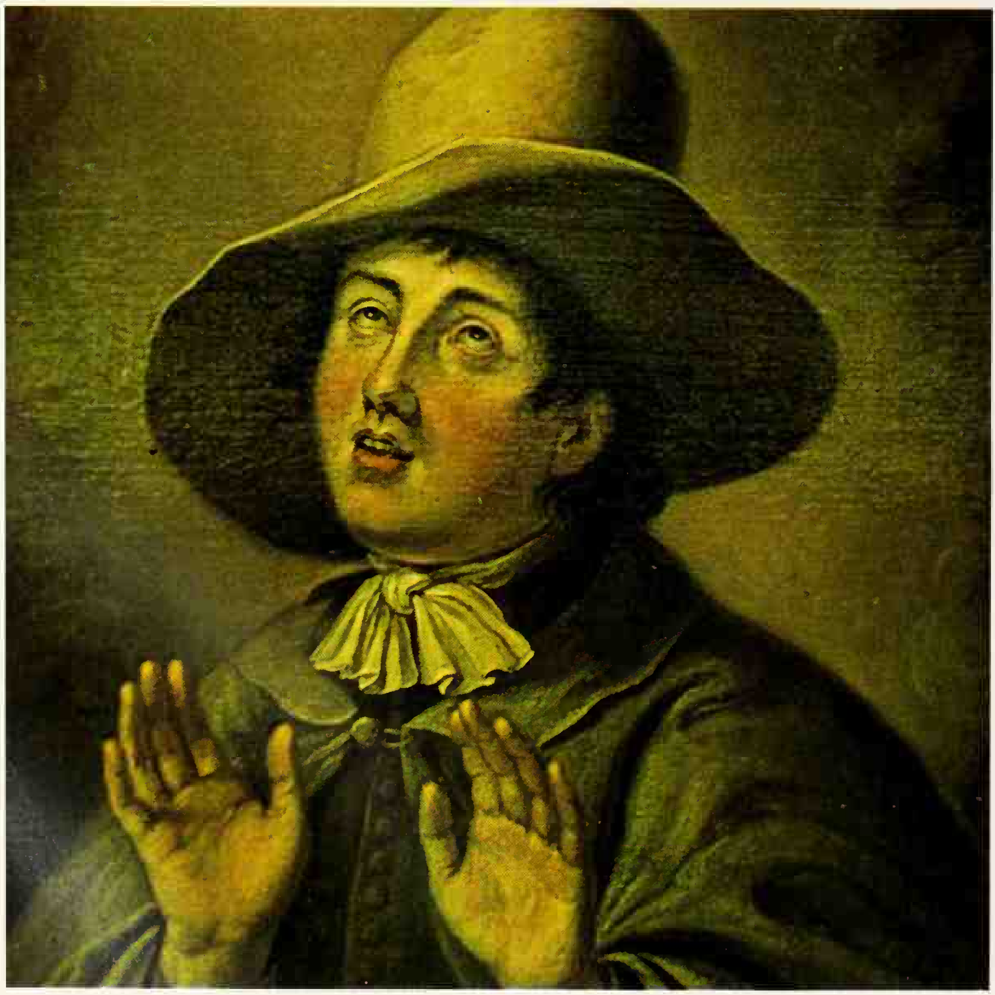
(See also SPRINGS AND WELLS; WATER.)

GEORGE FOX

THE QUAKERS have survived vicissitudes which have swept away many of the lesser sects who arose during the English Civil War and after. That they have endured for so long and have done so with relatively little change in their values and organization is largely due to their founder, George Fox (1624-1691). Although a mystic and a prophet, Fox had both practical sense and organizing ability. Perhaps above all else he acquired the gift of communicating not only precepts and doctrines but the patience, tolerance and uprightness that has marked Quakers since the 17th century.

Fox, the son of a puritan weaver, was born at Fenny Drayton in Leicestershire. He received little education and was eventually apprenticed to a shoemaker. As a young man he disputed with a number of Puritan clergy without finding satisfaction, and in 1646 he came to the conclusion that a minister should be more than a mere scholar. His own claim to knowledge could not rest on scholarship and so he came to emphasize the superiority of inspiration and revelation to mere 'book learning'. The sense of Christ dwelling within became the legitimation of his own preaching and, subsequently, of Quaker practice.

In the late 1640s, Fox travelled about the



Theodore Helzel

Inner experience of communion with God formed the basis of George Fox's teaching and is at the heart of Quaker belief: portrait by C. W Peale

English Midlands, preaching, testifying in churches and meeting with various groups of religious Nonconformists. The Baptists proved to be more receptive than others, and from them he won most of his following, who were known as 'Children of Light' or 'Friends of Truth'. The name Society of Friends was established only after his death, although the term 'Friends' was often used. The name Quaker became current in the 1650s after a magistrate, Gervase Bennett, had thrown the expression at Fox during his trial in Derby.

In his early years, Fox's preaching was intemperate, and sometimes constituted a public disorder, as when he went through the streets proclaiming 'Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield'. Some early Quakers rejected all conventions and felt obliged to go naked in public, but Fox himself urged his followers in 1653 not to 'go out from the Spirit of God' into their own notions.

Fox had his earliest success in the north Midlands and in Westmorland, where Swarthmore Hall, home of Judge Fell and his wife Margaret, became a great centre for Quakers. Margaret Fell married Fox in 1669 after ten years of widowhood.

Fox was imprisoned eight times in his life. His preaching, while inspired by visions, had considerable social content. He spoke out against injustice, against low wages, capital punishment, cheating by merchants, drunkenness and enclosures; although he was less radical than the contemporary Levellers and Diggers, he was a convinced pacifist and advised against political involvements. Different as his theology was from that of the Puritans, he shared much of their social ethic and condemned dancing, sport and stage performances as vain, and enjoined Quakers to plain speech and dress. He instituted regular monthly and yearly meetings among his followers, who in the mid-1650s numbered about 30,000, and these became the working basis of Quaker organization.

His teaching of the 'Light within' (modern Quakers use the phrase 'inner Light') was thus set in a context of firm community control which reinforced the standards of integrity that Quakers were bidden to adopt. Fox continued to work at his *Journal* until his death at the age of 67.

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

SAINT FRANCIS (Francesco Bernardone) was born at Assisi, a small city of Umbria in central Italy, in either 1181 or the following year. He died, also at Assisi, in 1226.

The age before his birth had been one of rapid change in Italy. A century of widespread reform had been rich in capable and saintly popes, bishops, abbots and thinkers. Now reform and its institutions were beginning to flag. The cities began to expand and with increased population came an increase of those near or below subsistence level, as well as a new class of wealthy merchants and businessmen. The cities and towns formed small, intensely individual units, frequently at war with each other. It was in this turmoil of social and religious upheaval and questing that the orthodox orders of friars had their birth.

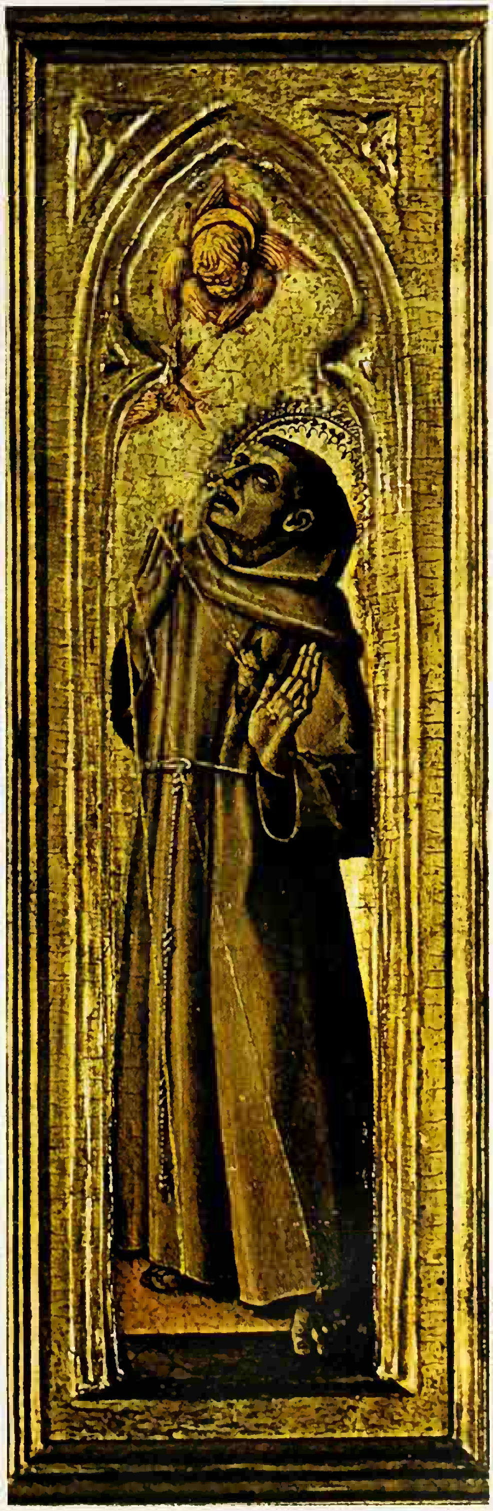
The son of a wealthy cloth merchant, Francis grew up at Assisi among a lively, pleasure-loving, extravagant group, and his energy and charm soon made him its leader. Then during a war between Assisi and Perugia (1201–2) he was captured and suffered a year's imprisonment. This was followed by a long illness and the first of a series of experiences which Francis began to interpret as divine warnings and invitations. In 1204, while embarking on another military mission, he was halted by a dream and he turned back to care for the needy and sick – particularly the lepers – and rebuilt the ruined church of San Damiano at Assisi. He then renounced his patrimony to become a hermit. Finally in February 1209, on hearing at Mass the gospel with the apostolic commission: 'Preach as you go... take no gold, nor silver nor copper in your belts' (Matthew, chapter 10), he accepted forever his vocation to follow the commands and counsel of Christ literally and in absolute poverty.

He travelled the country preaching penitence and the imitation of Christ and was joined by his first brethren. In 1210 he visited Rome with 12 others and received from Pope Innocent III confirmation of a simple rule (the *Primitive Rule*) composed almost entirely of gospel precepts. For a short time the Little Brothers (*Fratres Minores*) lived together near Assisi at St Mary of the Angels, better known as the Porziuncula, traversing Umbria in couples, preaching and working for their daily bread. Such a group, with a manifestly saintly and magnetic leader, exactly met the religious demand of the age, and recruits flocked to join him. Their sisters heard the call and in 1211-2 Francis founded the House of the Poor Ladies by the church of San Damiano, for in the society of that day enclosure was essential for religious women. The nobly born Clare Favarone (later St Clare) and her nuns took vows of absolute poverty and were to pray for the brethren and assist them as best they could.

The numbers continued to grow but for a long while Francis refused to accept formal organization. Throughout his life he remained a magnetic, baffling leader who seemed often to despise elementary rules of prudence and commonsense, disappearing when most needed and unbending in the face of opposition, yet always possessed of luminous spiritual insight and wisdom in counsel.

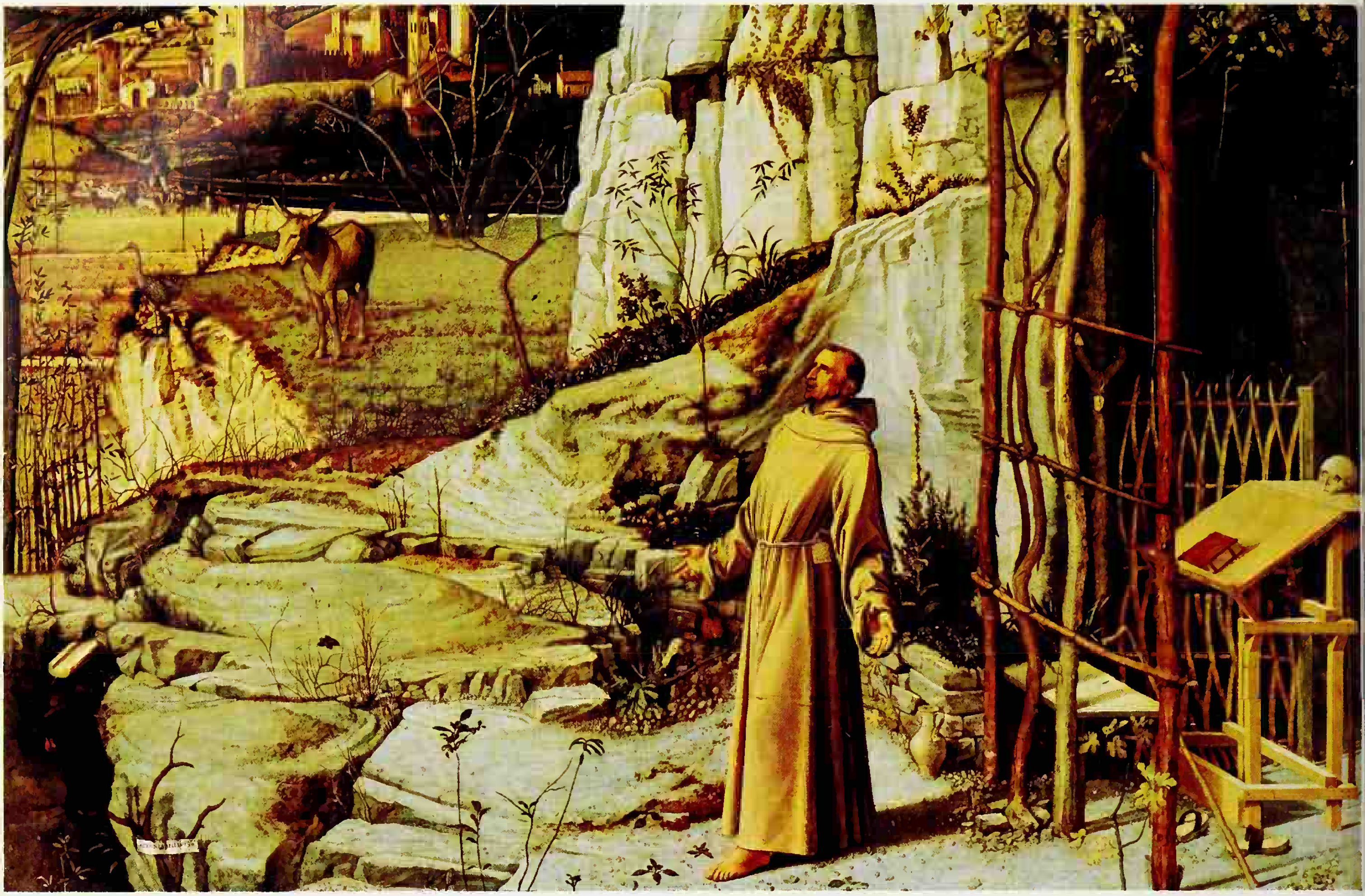
Brother Sun

Before long a tension developed that was to continue in the history of the Order between the simple, exacting, heroic demands of Francis, accepted to the full by a few intimate followers, and the needs of a large body of friars, some of them men of learning and influence who, supported by papal authority, aimed at making his teaching viable by adapting it to the capabilities of the many. Cardinal Ugolino, first as devoted disciple and later as Pope Gregory IX, must take much of the credit – or blame – for translating Francis's intuitions into a code. For long Francis resisted: he wanted no order, no constitutions. If a brother heard the call he accepted the commands and counsels of Christ, and nothing else was needed. Compelled at last to write a rule, the so called *First Rule*, he allowed Ugolino to promulgate it at a gathering of all the friars in 1221. It proved too exacting, too spiritual – or too vague – for the multitude, and after much suffering and labour Francis, assisted by others, rewrote it in language that was less spiritual and more



Painting attributed to Carlo Crivelli of St Francis receiving the stigmata

Samuel H. Kress Collection Portland Art Museum



St Francis 'lived always on the spiritual level': he felt a unique sense of brotherhood with all living beings and the entire life of Nature. *St Francis in Ecstasy*, by Bellini

juridical. This, the *Second Rule*, was approved by Honorius III and has remained ever since in essentials the rule of the Franciscan Order.

This short account must omit many of the characteristic actions in the saint's life such as his missionary journey to Spain, or his sortie East with the crusaders, to be captured and to preach before the Sultan in Egypt, or missions of the friars to France, England, Germany, Greece, Morocco and elsewhere. In 1220 he resigned the official headship of his order, exhausted as he was both by illness and the oppostion to his ideals, and for the rest of his life he moved round Umbria surrounded by a group of his First Friars, of whom Brother Leo was the chief. In 1224 he went through a mystical experience on Monte La Verna, after which his hands, feet and side bore the five wounds of the crucified Jesus. Later he composed his magnificent praise of Creation, the *Canticle of Brother Sun*.

For the rest of his life he was ill and almost blind, but he retained his fortitude and spiritual clarity of mind, as also an exquisite tenderness towards his companions and friends. In his *Testament* he reiterated with poignant emphasis his commands of poverty, simplicity of mind, and avoidance of all privilege and honour. Cared for in his last weeks by St Clare at San Damiano, he died at the Porziuncula on 3 October 1226. He was canonized by his old friend Ugolino (Gregory IX) in 1228 and two years later was finally interred beneath a magnificent basilica bearing his name.

St Francis was indeed one of the most remarkable men of medieval Europe, in his personality, his creation of 'power-ideas' and his influence upon his contemporaries and posterity. While the Catholic Church has always venerated him as a saint with an immense following and as founder of a religious order which has for many centuries been the most numerous of all, he has been for many, both within and without the Christian allegiance, the most attractive saint of history.

The 'Only True Christian'

Francis, the gay, impulsive, naive, articulate Italian appears more clearly than any other historical character to embody the springlike delicacy of primitive Italian art and literature. His poetic masterpiece, the *Canticle of Brother Sun* is a hymn to the beauty of elemental creation – sun, moon, stars, wind, water – and of natural life in birds, animals and flowers. His unique sense of brotherhood with all living beings, his love of children, birds and animals is likewise entirely original, and this together with his wise and humorous treatment of his simplest brethren, admits us to his intimacy, without any reserve. His hatred of all that is mechanistic and legalistic in church life has endeared him to many at the present day.

He has been hailed as the most Christ-like of men, the 'only true Christian'. All saints by definition must be recognizable as followers and imitators of Christ, but St Francis as compared to a St Augustine or a St Hildebrand, will appear to many as it were a facsimile, a reappearance, of the Christ who walked in Galilee. No doubt this is to simplify, if not to blur the full vision of Christ. Yet if such a view misses many qualities of Jesus, Francis has a Christ-like capacity of seeing all creatures and all events from their centre, God, and in his last years he is seen more clearly than any other medieval saint as one sharing in the Passion of Christ. He resembles Jesus in another way also. Most men, faced with the eternal tension in religious life between law and liberty, choose one or the other on the purely human level, where law may become compulsion, and liberty, licence. St Francis, living always on the spiritual level, had the freedom of the sons of God, to whom law is a translation into words of their free choice. He would have nothing to do with monastic rules, canon law, scholastic theology, and dispensations because he had within him the law of life, the will of God.

But he was in no sense a revolutionary or as he used to be hailed, the first Protestant. He knew every least article of the teaching of the Church with the accuracy of a theologian, and he recognized in every detail the authority of priest, bishop and pope, the sanctity of the sacraments and the worshipfulness of the Bible as the Word of God. Without all this, he could not, either in his person or in his order, have shared as fully as he did with St Dominic in the rebuilding of the Church. Therefore although many historians may say that he did no more than precipitate a vocation for which many of his contemporaries were groping, it was he who created the friar, a new type of religious person, differing from both the hermit and monk, who went out to the poor, to the city-dweller and to the pagan, calling the world to absolute poverty, and nakedly following the naked Christ on the Cross. The message of Francis was to live by the words of Christ accepted literally and fully. Like Christ's message it was uncompromising and impossible to human nature unaided. It was modified and glossed by those who came after, but Francis and his gospel remained and his call is still heard.

The life of St Francis presents many problems of chronology and critical interpretation, and none of the numerous modern *Lives* can be called definitive. The two classical pictures of the saint, St Bonaventure's *Life* and *The Little Flowers*, the one a model piece of hagiography, the other a jewel of early Italian prose, are equally unsatisfying; the former because of its selective, tendentious character, the latter because it is impossible to separate the historical and the mythical elements which are presented in it. The student of St Francis must go to the two *Lives* by his contemporary, Thomas of Celano, and to the mass of early reminiscences contained in the *Legend of the Two Companions*, the *Sayings of Brother Leo* and the enigmatic but fascinating *Mirror of Perfection*.

DAVID KNOWLES

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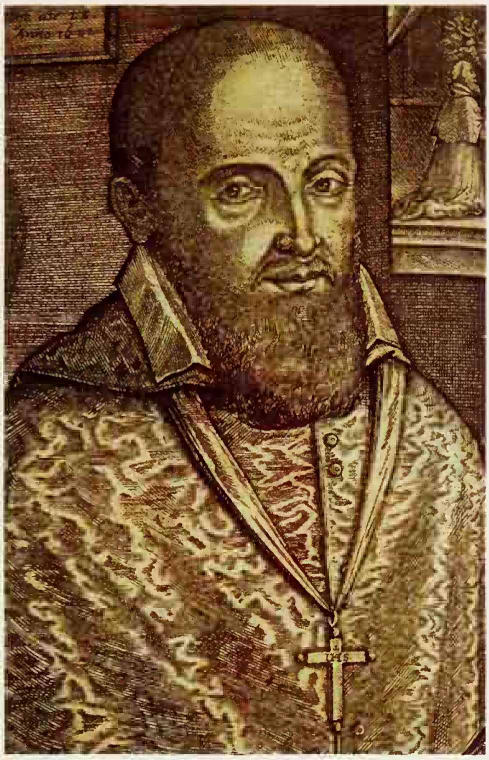
ST FRANCIS DE SALES

THE SON OF A NOBLEMAN of Savoy, in the French Alps, Francis de Sales (1567–1622), was one of the more attractive figures of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. He was educated by the Jesuits in Paris and studied law in Padua where he took his final degree at the age of 24; he then returned home to the family chateau on the Lake of Annecy and resumed the life of a young aristocrat.

Ever since boyhood he had wanted to be a priest, and had retained this ambition despite his father's opposition. An opportunity seemed to offer when the provostship of the chapter of Geneva fell vacant; it was felt that this was a post that the son of a nobleman could suitably occupy and Francis was ordained priest and given the benefice, with his father's grudging consent, in 1593. He devoted himself to the service of the poor and undertook a mission in the neighbouring region of Chablais, preaching to the militant Calvinists with some success, despite the considerable danger of the task and threats of violence. Within four years the area had returned to Catholicism, in recognition of which he was appointed assistant bishop of Geneva and in 1602 he succeeded to the see. Francis immediately set to work on a heavy programme of reorganization and reform and his fame as a preacher and spiritual director spread. For the rest of his life he devoted himself to this work with tenacity and enthusiasm.

While he was preaching a Lenten course of sermons at Dijon in 1604 he met Jeanne Françoise Frémyot de Chantal, the recently bereaved widow of a baron. Francis became spiritual director to the unhappy woman, who was to find her vocation by becoming co-foundress of his proposed new religious order for women. Known as the Order of the Visitation, it was intended for those with 'strong souls in weak bodies', single women and widows who, by virtue of their age or infirmity, would be refused admission to the older orders and would have had difficulty in observing the strict rules. Such an idea met with considerable criticism and the original plan had to be modified before it found approval in Rome: enclosure was insisted upon, though the founders had planned at first to allow the nuns to go out and undertake works of charity. These first nuns were guided by a sure hand during the early days of their order, and by the time of St Francis's death in 1662 there were nearly 20 convents in existence. It was at one of these that he died, at the convent of Bellecour in Lyons, on his way home.



Chris Barker

St Francis de Sales was instrumental in altering the attitude that to live a fully Christian life it was necessary to cut yourself off from the everyday world: he believed that a life of devotion is possible in the everyday world. Portrait of St Francis from the 1630 edition of his work on mystical theology, *Treatise on the Love of God*

A Gentleman of God

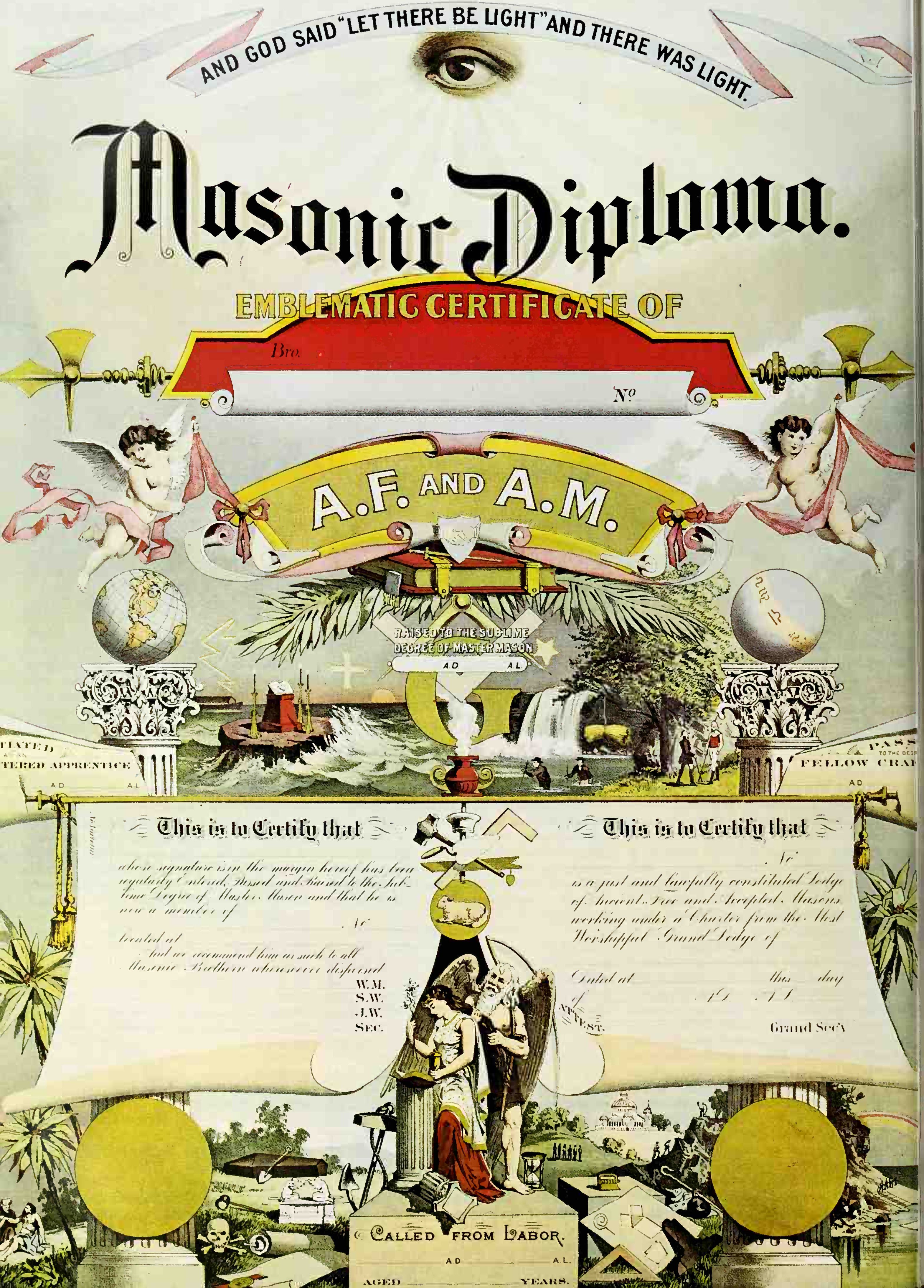
Francis de Sales was known throughout his life for his gentleness and kindness; he was always a man of moderation, displaying great courtesy and an unusual sensitivity towards the feelings of others. Today he is remembered principally for his writings. These were largely occasioned by the requirements of his work as spiritual pastor and by his efforts to make his diocese a dynamic focus of Christian faith. His most important book is probably his *Introduction to a Devout Life* which was instrumental in altering the firmly entrenched attitudes to what people considered constituted the devotional life. The prevalent view of the time, particularly in France, was that the only path to holiness, to living a genuinely Christian life to the full, was to enter a strict religious order, thereby cutting oneself off from the world outside. Francis opposed this idea and in his book he purported to show that a life of devotion is possible in the world and indeed that this is the duty of every ordinary Christian.

Francis's other great work is his *Treatise on the Love of God*. In the *Devout Life* he is dealing with the theology of asceticism, knowledge of God through self-denial and preparation; in the *Treatise* his subject matter is mystical theology, knowledge of God through spiritual communion. He speaks of the love of God as an obligation which binds us all and therefore gives instruction of a very practical nature.

Francis himself was not at first a contemplative; he only seems to have explored the possibilities of deep meditation under the influence of the works of St Teresa of Avila and through understanding and sharing the mystical experiences in the lives of two women under his guidance: Jeanne Françoise de Chantal and Madame Acarie. The *Treatise on the Love of God* was written as a result of this new interest and his own progress in the mystical state. In it he shows how each individual can and must attempt contemplative prayer and the book therefore forms a natural complement to the *Devout Life*. For St Francis the whole purpose of contemplation is conformity of the human to the divine will. His so-called prayer of 'simplicity' which is 'indifferent' to all reward, even an eternal reward, was to exert great influence in religious circles during the next two centuries and editions of the *Devout Life* continue to appear.

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

FURTHER READING: H. Bremond, *Literary History of Religious Thought in France* (Octagon Books, vol. 1 and 2, 1973); E. K. Sanders, *St. Francis de Sales* (S.P.C.K., London, 1938).



AND GOD SAID "LET THERE BE LIGHT" AND THERE WAS LIGHT.

Masonic Diploma.

EMBLEMATIC CERTIFICATE OF

Bro.

No.

A.F. AND A.M.

RAISED TO THE SUBLIME DEGREE OF MASTER MASON

A.D. A.L.

TIATED

A.N

TERED APPRENTICE

AD AL

PASS

TO THE DEG

FELLOW CRA

A.D.

Ne Varietur

This is to Certify that

whose signature is in the margin hereof has been regularly Entered, Passed and Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason and that he is now a member of

No.

located at

and we recommend him as such to all Masonic Brethren wheresoever dispersed

W.M.
S.W.
J.W.
Sec.

This is to Certify that

No.

is a just and lawfully constituted Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons working under a Charter from the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of

Dated at this day of A.D. A.L.

Attest.

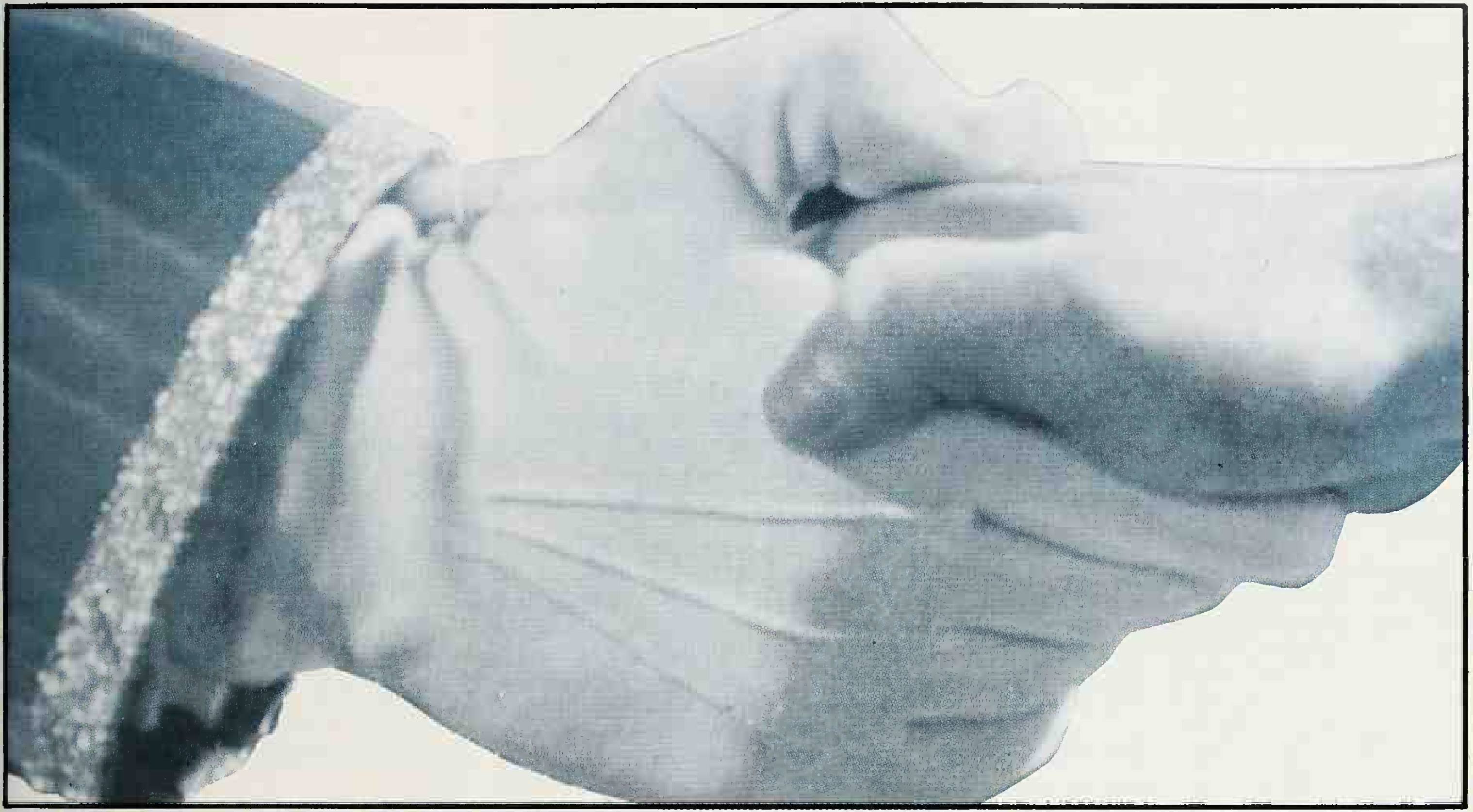
Grand Sec'y

Called from Labor

A.D A.L.

AGED YEARS.

FREEMASONRY



Freemasonry began in the Middle Ages as an early trade union for builders. Its openness to all who accept a Supreme Being as the Great Architect of the world and its enticing air of mystery have made it the most popular of all secret societies

ONE DEFINITION of Freemasonry is that it is 'a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols'. Freemasons are members of a so-called secret society but membership is freely available to any man of good repute. There is no question of recruitment or invitation to join: individuals simply find their way to the Craft, mostly through a friend who is already a member.

Any brief attempt to explain Freemasonry's inner meaning, its historical development and its place in modern society, presents formidable difficulties. It is not that information is difficult to obtain. On the contrary, anyone sufficiently curious can learn a great deal from the available literature, which is enormous. A Masonic bibliography published in Germany in 1912 contains no fewer than 40,000 titles. It seems, however, that to begin to understand the inner meaning of Freemasonry one must belong to it, if only because the actual experience is more important and significant than merely 'academic' knowledge.

For the outsider the perplexing factors are Freemasonry's status as a secret society and the significance of the secrets that it allegedly so jealously guards. Again, it is often asked why so many adult and presumably sensible men should practise rituals that include secret words and signs. However, on the basis of any merely superficial assessment or, even worse, complete ignorance, it would be unwise to dismiss an international sociological phenomenon as complete nonsense.

The Craft, which is banned in all Communist countries, in Roman Catholic Spain and Portugal, although not in Italy, continues to attract members on a worldwide scale. Its appeal clearly operates on two different levels. For some the attraction is obviously social. The Lodge is an exclusive club and the business of 'working' a ritual is the prelude to a convivial meal. For others, however, Freemasonry's rituals, teachings and symbolism have a deeper and more spiritual content. In this context we encounter the Craft at its most attractive and significant level.

Band of Brothers

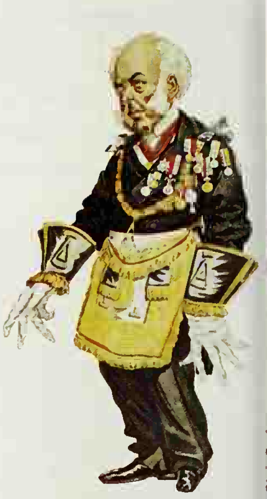
Freemasonry is neither a religion nor a substitute for religion. It embraces all forms of religious belief which conceive of a Supreme Being and in a Lodge men of all creeds meet in complete amity. Its rituals, which in some respects resemble short Morality Plays or moral charades, simply reflect in symbolic terms concepts of idealism, humanity, charity and fraternity.

But why the necessity for secrecy? This, too, has a symbolical meaning. The tradition was inherited from the old Operative or Working Masons, who because of the mobility of their profession, were denied the advantages of a static guild organization. The Lodges arose wherever masons were assembled for large scale building works, such as a cathedral, and formed a flexible network throughout the country. The masons required proof of professional skill before accepting an itinerant colleague as a master craftsman. If the newcomer knew the answers in their correct form to certain veiled questions, also certain passwords and signs, it conveyed to his interrogator that he really was a Master Mason, a master of his craft, and hence qualified to accept employment and if need be help from a fellow craftsman. In other words it was a form of primitive trade unionism.

Later the Speculative (Non-operative) Freemasons took over the traditional questions, passwords and signs, not as an antiquarian mumbo-jumbo, but simply to emphasize that oaths of fidelity, fraternity

The three ordinary degrees to which masons attain are those of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason *Left* The American Masonic Diploma awarded at the Third Degree bears the symbolic working tools presented to the candidate on initiation: the 24 inch gauge representing the hours of the day, the gavel, a symbol of conscience, and the chisel which stands for education *Above* The Masonic grip of the raised thumb, initially enabled members to recognize each other without openly revealing themselves

All Freemasonry in existence today can ultimately be traced to the Grand Lodge of England constituted in 1717



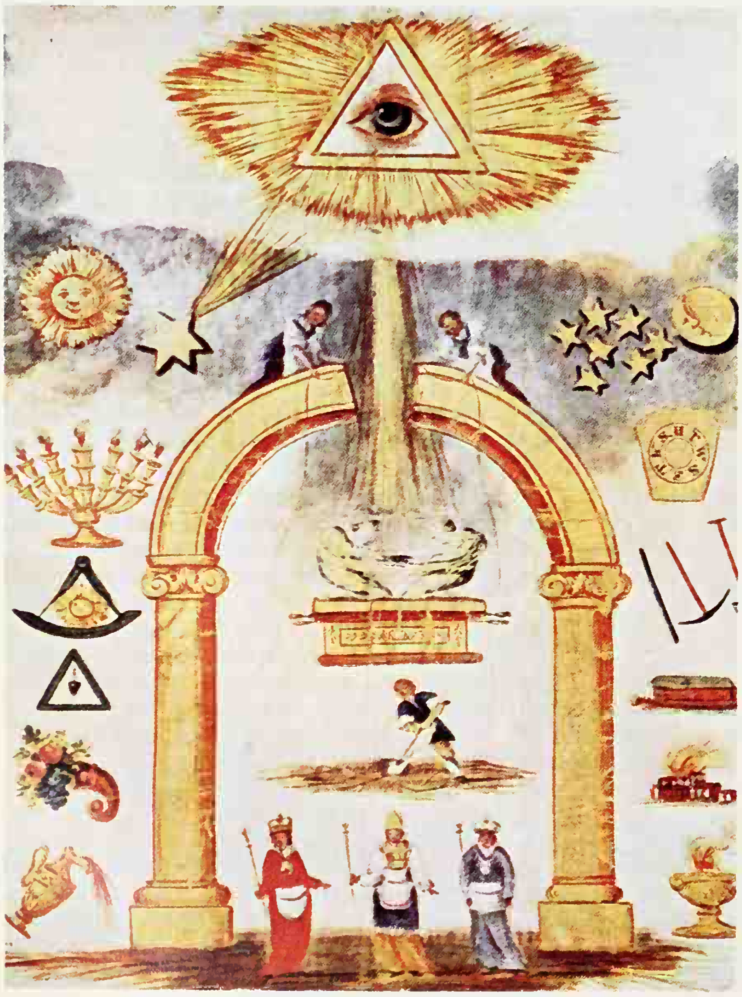
and the like must never be taken lightly. Hence even Freemasonry's 'secrets' are symbolic. That they contain nothing incompatible with conventional religious beliefs is reflected by the fact that so many Anglican and Nonconformist clergy are Freemasons.

Gentleman's Club

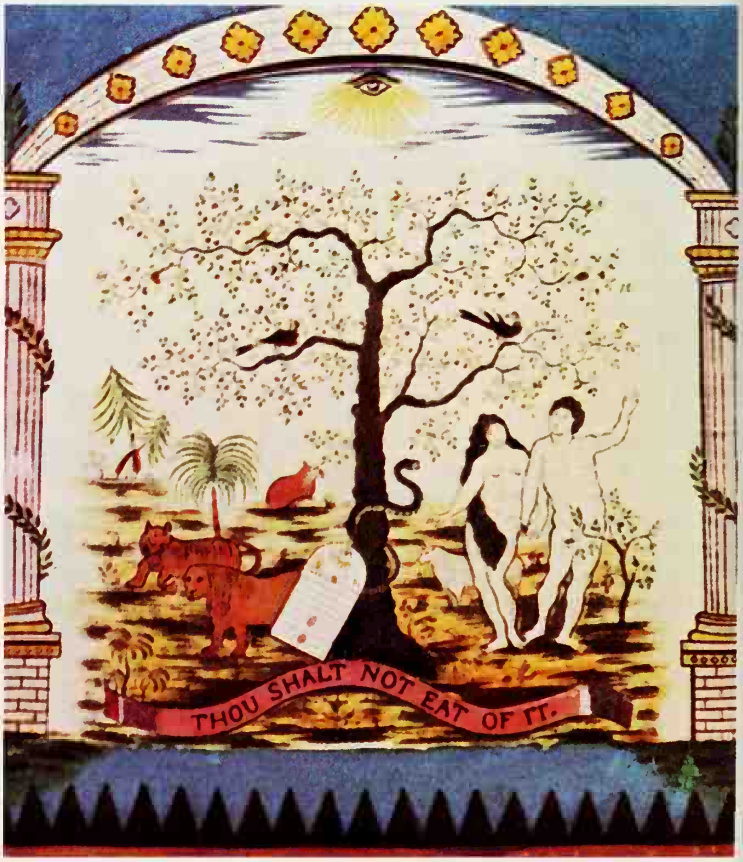
Speculative Freemasonry was a British development of the early 1700s. Operative Masons continued into the 17th century, as survivors of the medieval guild system, with its complex traditions and practices in which mutual aid was a prominent feature. Then late in that century men who were not professionally connected with building began to join the so-called Lodges of the Operative Masons. This was probably done in much the same way that individuals still seek membership of one or other of the ancient Livery Companies of the City of London. Gentlemen also joined because they were interested in architecture or keen to have their own designs executed. Elias Ashmole, the antiquary, recorded in his diary that he was 'made a Freemason' at Warrington in 1646, and he certainly had no links with Operative Masonry.

The history of the transitional stage from Operative to Speculative Freemasonry is both sparsely documented and obscure, as is the early history of Speculative Freemasonry. However, a notable event occurred in the year 1717 when the members of four London Lodges met at a tavern near Covent Garden and constituted themselves 'A Grand Lodge pro Tempore (for the time being) in Due Form and . . . resolved to hold the Annual Assembly and Feast, and then to choose a Grand Master from among themselves, till they should have the Honour of a Noble Brother at their Head'. All Freemasonry in existence today can be traced, through one channel or another, to the Grand Lodge of England thus constituted in 1717. A 'Noble Brother' as Grand Master presented himself in the person of the Duke of Montague in 1721. Since then the office of Grand Master has always been held by one of noble or royal birth, for example a recent Grand Master has been H.R.H. the Duke of Kent.

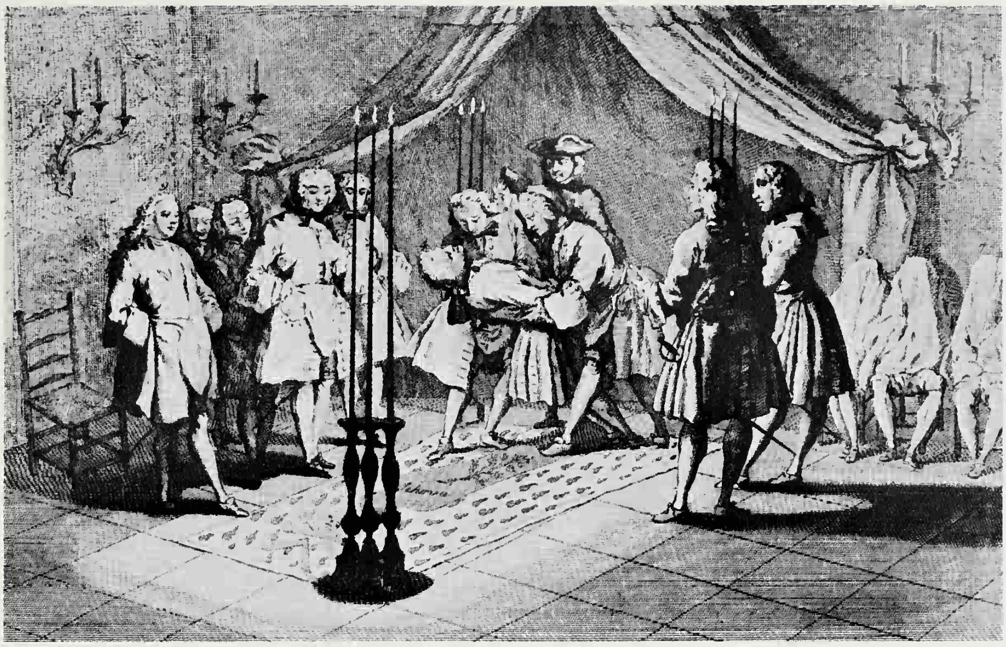
Initially Grand Lodge must have been

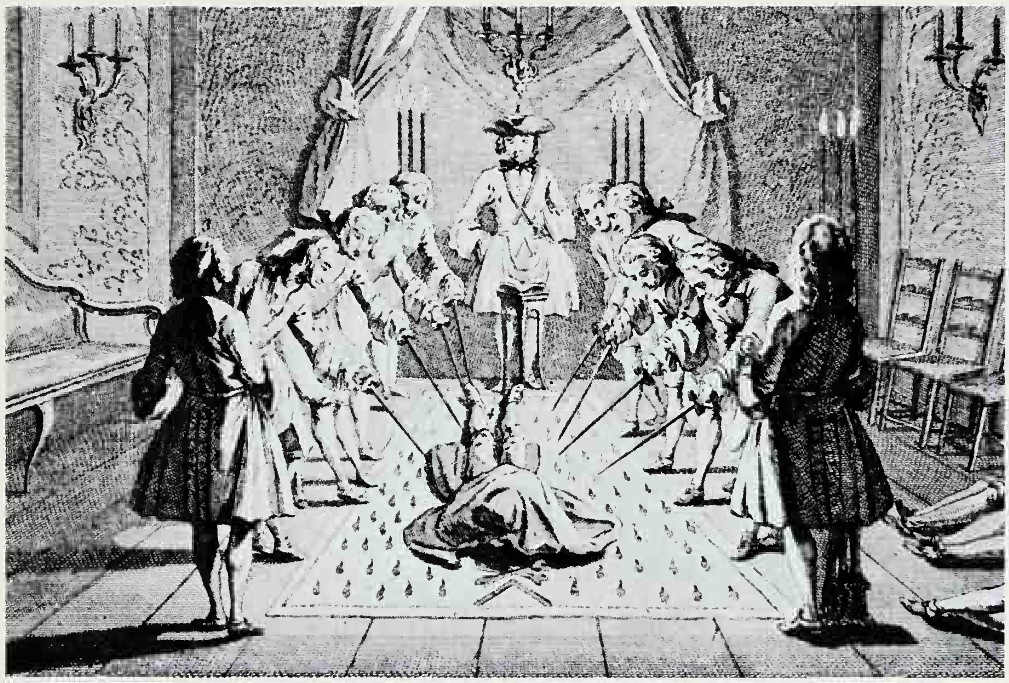


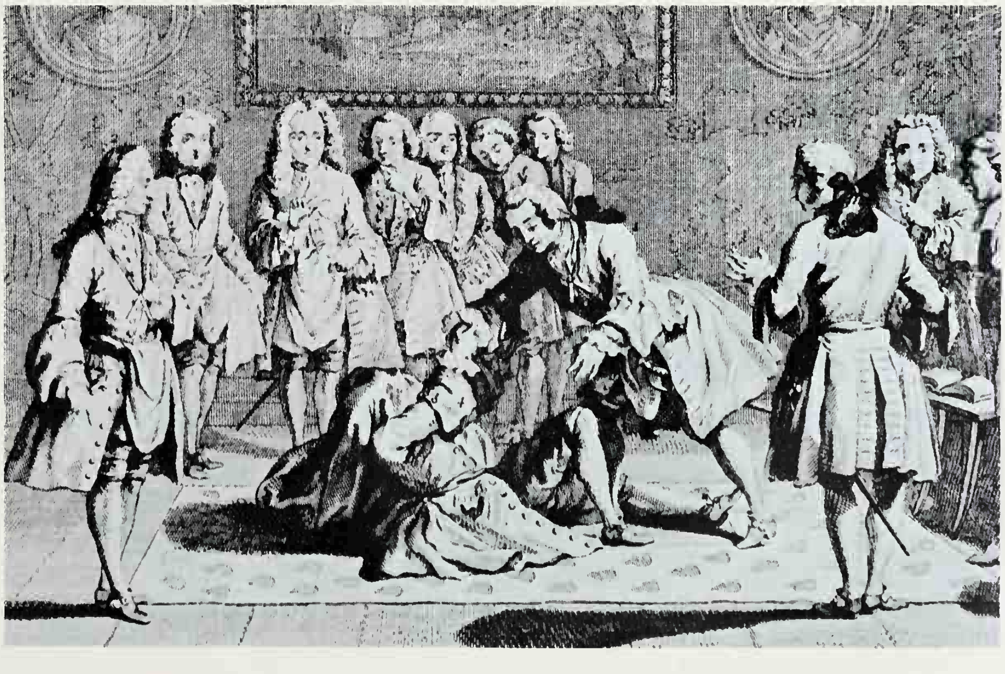
Masonic aprons are decorated with symbols and emblems *Above* A drawing from an 1869 edition of *Vanity Fair* showing the Worshipful Grand Master the Earl of Zetland *Below* A calico apron *Below left* An apron from the English Lodge known as the 'Antient' Lodge


THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT.

Right **In the 18th century some Masonic groups in France and Germany dabbled in occultism: 18th century engravings of a French initiation ceremony *Above* The candidate is symbolically lowered into the grave *Centre* His head is covered with a bloody cloth and the members of the Lodge point their swords at him *Below* The Grand Master raises the newly received Apprentice with the mason's grip**







Chris Barker

an informal affair with not very much to govern. In 1721, however, the representatives of 16 Lodges commissioned Dr James Anderson (1684–1739), a minister of the Church of Scotland, to prepare and edit a slim quarto volume, published in 1723, that subsequently became famous as *Anderson's Constitutions*. The inclusion of 39 General Articles for the government of the Craft indicates the beginning of a more formal administration.

It is probable that the rituals were still in an early stage of development. In most Lodges there were only two degrees, namely those of Apprentice and Fellow. The modern system of three degrees, that is, Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, taken in three separate steps, came into being a little later.

There was a rapid expansion of interest in Freemasonry during the 1720s. A list of Lodges published in 1725 includes 64 names. The first Provincial Grand Masters, namely those for North and South Wales, were appointed in 1726. The first overseas Lodges were constituted in Bengal, Gibraltar and Madrid by 1728.

One of the most surprising features of Speculative Freemasonry's early history is the Craft's vigorous and speedy expansion in Europe. An English Lodge was founded at Paris in 1732 and three years later Freemasonry had reached Portugal, Holland and Sweden. The first German Lodge was established at Hamburg in 1737. During the next decade the Craft took root in many other European centres, although not without encountering, here and there, official hostility. The first Papal Bull against Freemasonry (*In Eminenti*) was proclaimed in 1738 by Clement XII.

According to F. L. Pick and G. N. Knight, the authors of *Pocket History of Freemasonry*, 'when Freemasonry spread beyond our Islands it fell into hands not content with the plain unvarnished story taught in its original home. The links with the homely operative past were not appreciated by the more modish followers of what was proving a fashionable cult, so a host of brilliant ceremonies were quickly developed, many of which proved ephemeral while others have lasted to the present day and are accepted and respected throughout the world.'

The 'plain, unvarnished story' refers to

The Entered Apprentice's Song

Come let us prepare
We brothers that are
Assembled on merry occasion;
Let's drink, laugh and sing;
Our wine has a Spring,
Here's health to an Accepted Mason.

The World is in pain
Our secrets to gain
But still let them wonder and gaze on;
They ne'er can divine
The word or the sign
Of a Free and an Accepted Mason.

'Tis This and 'tis That,
They cannot tell What,
Why so many Great Men of the Nation,
Should Aprons put on
To make themselves one
With a Free and an Accepted Mason . . .

Then join Hand in Hand
T'each other firm stand
Let's be merry and put a bright face on;
What mortal can boast
So noble a Toast
As a Free and an Accepted Mason.

Rev James Anderson *Book of Constitutions (1723)*

what was taught in Great Britain in the traditional three degrees. Masonic innovators in Europe, and later in North America, introduced many new Orders, Rites and degrees of great number and complexity.

Continental Lodges

The history of Freemasonry in France and Germany is particularly interesting. During the 18th century the Craft attracted many men of distinguished lineage in both countries. In France, for instance, the royal Duke of Orleans, nicknamed Philippe Egalité, presided over the Grand Lodge of France until it ceased to function during the Revolution. During the second half of the 18th century alongside the regular and so-called 'High Grade' Freemasonry there were, in both France and Germany, a number of Masonic sects that dabbled with alchemy and occultism, while in Germany there was the so-called Order of the Gold and Rosy Cross (see ROSICRUCIANS). In England during the 1880s the famous magical society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn adopted most of the latter's grades (see GOLDEN DAWN).

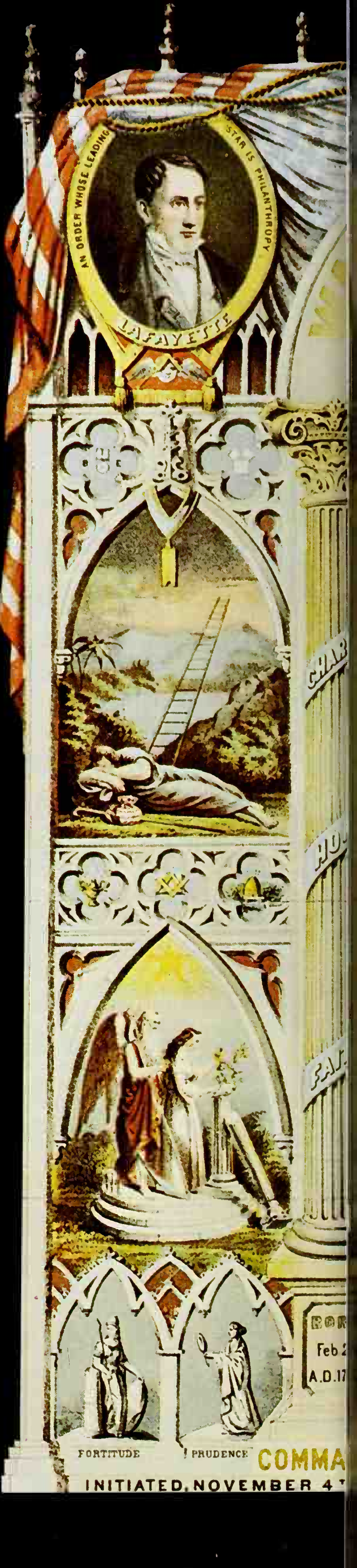
Of the 18th century French Lodges the most interesting is probably the Loge des Neuf Soeurs (The 'Nine Sisters' Lodge), whose membership included some of the nation's most progressive intellects: the astronomer Lalande, the mathematician Condorcet, and the publicist Camille Desmoulins, who led the storming of the Bastille during the Revolution. Benjamin Franklin, the American ambassador, was also a member. The hypothesis that the Freemasons and, above all, those in the Loge des Neuf Soeurs, instigated the French Revolution is untenable although it could be said that as the ideals of Masonry are toleration and free-thinking, their spirit influenced both the French and American revolutions.

Since the 1870s relations between the French Grand Orient and the United Grand Lodge of England have ceased because of the removal of the affirmation of the Great Architect of the Universe from the Grand Orient's Constitutions. To outsiders, at least, the question of whether Freemasonry is or is not agnostic has always been a complex one. A. E. Waite, a Masonic historian, has simply observed that there is no preponderating religious sentiment, but a tacit agreement to abide informally by certain conventions. In this respect the British genius for compromise is very evident.

The original growth of Freemasonry in Germany owes much to the support of Frederick the Great, who was initiated in 1738, two years before he ascended the Prussian throne. Successive generations of the Hohenzollern family were members of the Craft, the exception being the last Emperor, Wilhelm II, who was originally antipathetic and later hostile. Germany was the home of the legend that the First World War was instigated by 'international Jewry' which, in turn, was alleged to have dominated the French Grand Orient. Hence it is not surprising that as soon as the Nazis came to power in 1933 they ruthlessly suppressed Freemasonry and imprisoned or even murdered many members. Since the early 1950s there has been a modest Masonic revival in Germany.

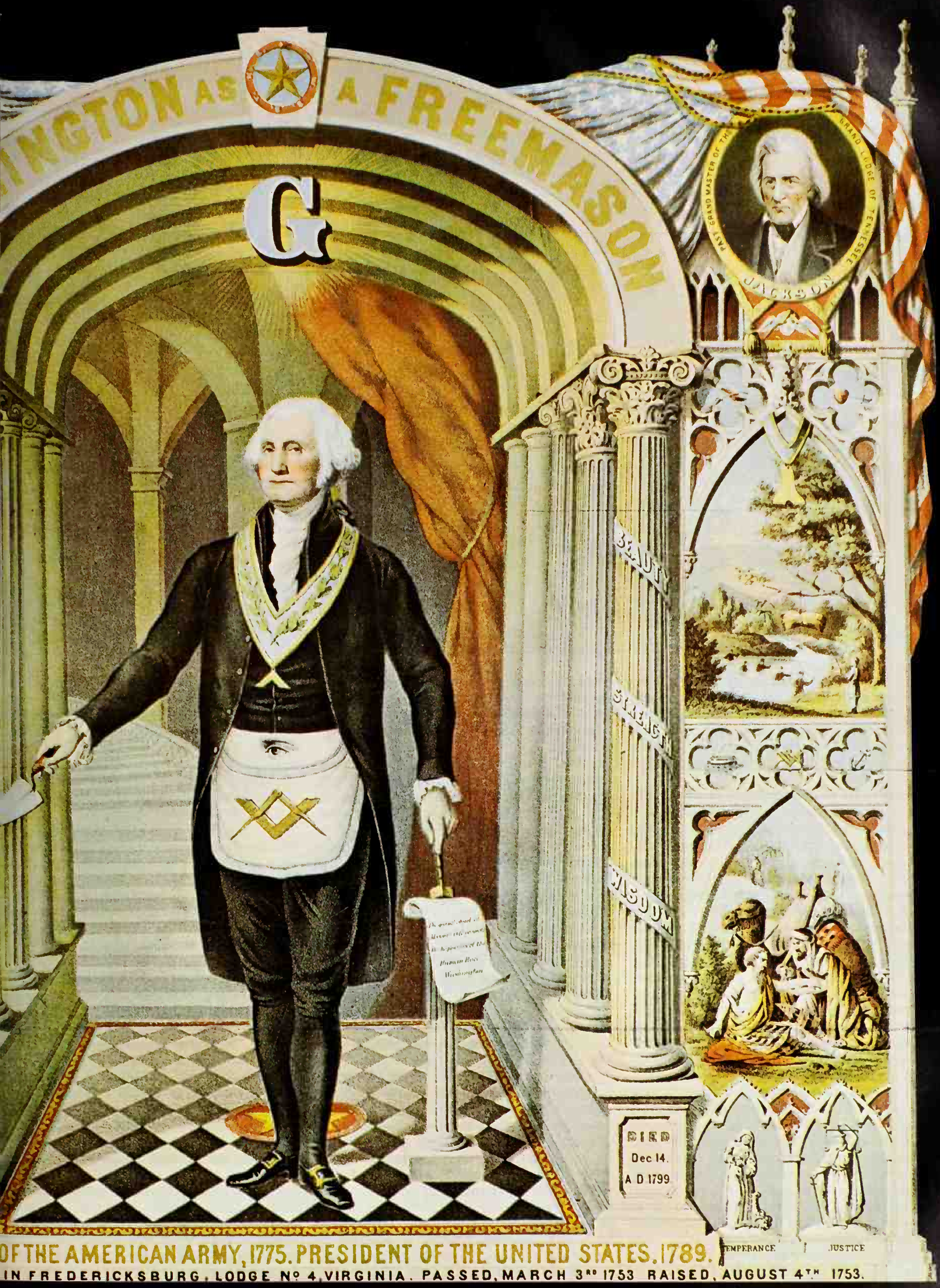
In North America Speculative Freemasonry had already taken root by 1730, on lines approved by Grand Lodge in London. Benjamin Franklin, who was hostile to the Craft in the early days, nevertheless became a Mason in 1731 and remained devoted to the cause until his death in 1790. George Washington was Master of his Lodge when he became the first President of the United States of America in 1789.

Such is the size of the United States that there is no single Grand Master but; instead, a Grand Lodge for each State. Another feature of American Freemasonry is the very large membership of many Lodges. Some years ago the average membership in each of the thousand or so Lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of New York was about 280. It is also on record that very recently there were 43 Lodges in Texas with between a thousand and three thousand members. To anyone familiar with the intimate character of many British Lodges, with their 50–70 members, these very large numbers are somewhat intimidating.



Freemasonry with its ideals of toleration and free-thinking has attracted many eminent men in its history: George Washington was Master Mason of his Lodge when he became first President of the United States

Library of Congress


NGTON AS A FREEMASON
G
PAST GRAND MASTER OF THE GRAND LODGE OF TENNESSEE
JACKSON
BEAUTY
STRENGTH
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Dec 14.
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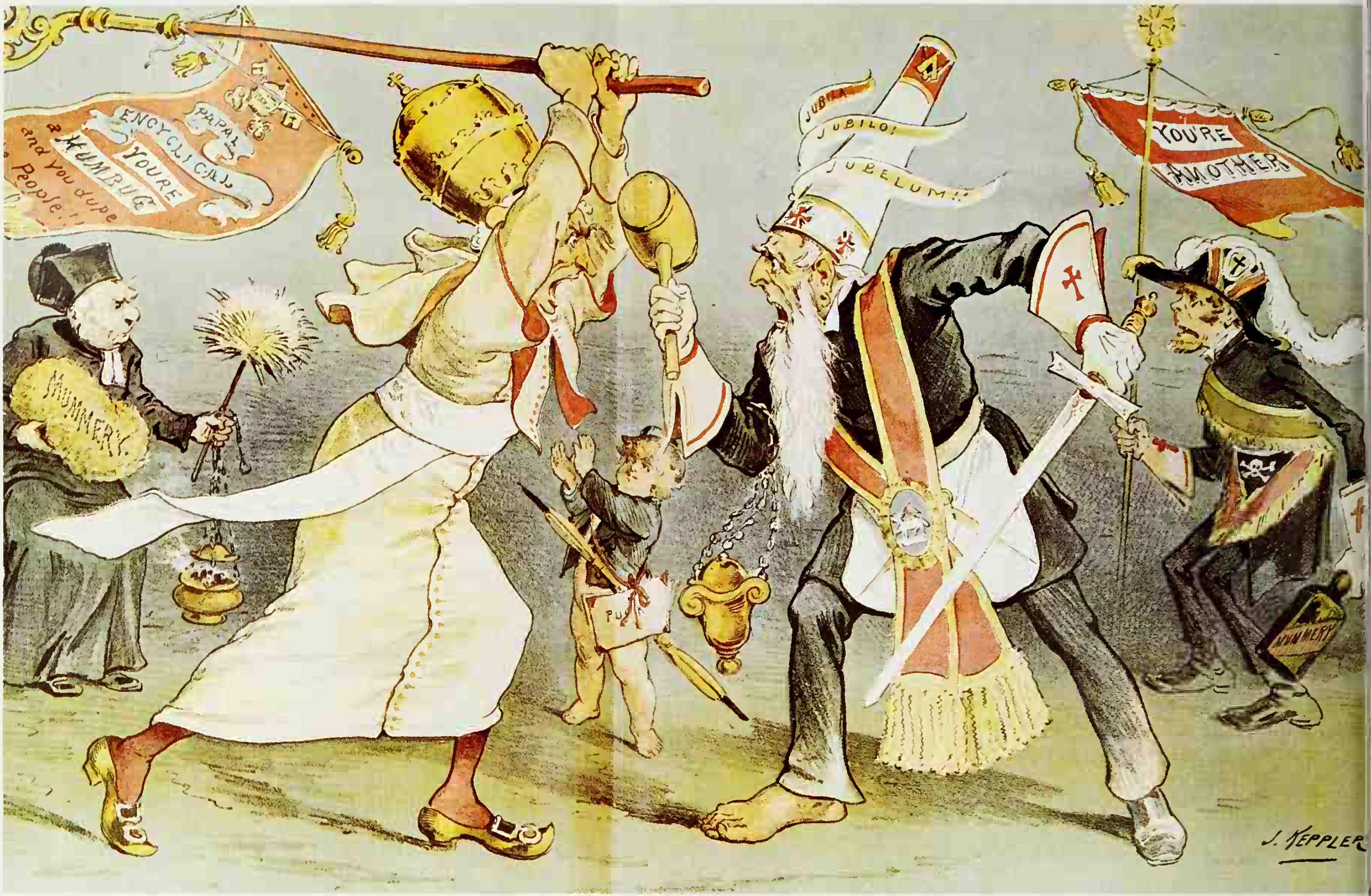
EMPERANCE
JUSTICE
OF THE AMERICAN ARMY, 1775. PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. 1789.
IN FREDERICKSBURG, LODGE No 4, VIRGINIA. PASSED, MARCH 3RD 1753 RAISED, AUGUST 4TH 1753.



In 1884 the pope issued an encyclical condemning Freemasonry: a cartoon appearing in *Puck* the same year satirized the conflict between the Church and Masonry

So much for the history of the Craft, but what of its detailed practice? The average modern Freemason, at least in Great Britain and the Commonwealth, is content to pass through the traditional three degrees which may be outlined as follows.

Secrets of Initiation

Freemasons meet in a specially furnished Lodge room. The Worshipful Master, the Wardens and other officers of the Lodge sit in their appointed places. In the anteroom adjoining the Lodge room a functionary known as the Tyler keeps guard to forbid the entry of strangers. First it is necessary to 'open' the Lodge in whichever degree is being 'worked'. A dialogue is held, in the form of questions and answers, between the Worshipful Master and various officers of the Lodge. Its time-honoured purpose is to remind the participants of the symbolical or allegorical nature of the ceremony they are performing.

When an initiation ceremony takes place the Lodge is opened in the First Degree. Outside in the ante-room the candidate is prepared by the Tyler. His collar, tie and jacket are removed and he lays aside his money: with this demonstration that the Lodge accepts him even in penury, he accepts the same obligation towards his fellow Masons. He is then led into the room blindfolded. The Tyler presents him to the Master and in reply to the question 'Whom have you there?' replies: 'A poor Candidate in a state of darkness.' The implication is that the darkness is spiritual but that he will be shown Light.

In the course of the ceremony the candidate swears a solemn oath not to reveal Freemasonry's secrets which, once again, are all symbolical. The blindfold is then removed. He is also shown certain grips and signs, a survival of the old Operative Masonry, and told certain words which refer to the symbolical building of King Solomon's temple.

He is presented with the First Degree Mason's working tools, and the Master explains their significance: the 24-inch gauge represents the 24 hours of the day, to be divided between prayer, work, refreshment and helping a friend; the gavel represents the power of conscience; the chisel represents the advantages of education. Finally the Master explains the symbolism of the First Degree tracing board, a rectangular plank containing a painted representation of the symbols appropriate to the First Degree. The Lodge is then 'closed' in the First Degree according to the appropriate ritual.

In due course the Entered Apprentice will be advanced, normally at intervals of about three months in each case, to the Second Degree (Fellow Craft) and finally to the Third Degree (Master Mason). In each case there is a specific ritual and the disclosure of more information. As a Master Mason the new Brother has nominally reached the end of the road although he can proceed further to the Royal Arch, which can roughly be described as an extension of Craft Masonry, and may later elect to ask for membership of the other available degrees and Orders. This is entirely a matter of choice.

The three Craft Degrees, then, form the basis of the whole Masonic system as practised in English-speaking countries. Together with the Royal Arch they form the sum total of Freemasonry as officially recognized by English Grand Lodge. However, for those who are interested there are certain 'Higher Degrees', such as Mark Masonry, the Knights Templar, the Rose-Croix and others.

It is possible to buy printed editions of the three Craft rituals but some material will be omitted. Any outsider can obtain at least a notion of the structure of these rituals. It appears however that nothing short of personal experience of participation in the rituals will serve to convey an understanding of what the Craft means to so many men. This means, in effect, that no outsider can ever really grasp Freemasonry's inner meaning.

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FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL upheavals of the French Revolution inevitably had religious repercussions, but the direct confrontation which ensued between the forces of the Revolution and Roman Catholic Church was an unforeseen consequence of the events of 1789. At first, the Revolution won the enthusiastic support of many of the lower clergy and the National Assembly considered itself Catholic, while proclaiming that no-one was to be molested for his opinions, 'even his religious opinions'.

In November 1789 however, caught in a financial crisis, the Assembly passed a decree which put all Church property at the disposal of the State and committed the Revolution to the principle that Church land and property belonged to the general community of believers, not to the Church itself. At the same time, the State was committed to maintaining the Church, which was to be independent of the Pope and all foreign prelates.

The new arrangements were enshrined in the Civil Constitution of the clergy of July 1790, and all priests were required to take an oath of loyalty. The result was a crisis of conscience in the French Catholic Church. The Pope condemned the Civil Constitution in April 1791, and most of the bishops and perhaps half of the lower clergy refused to take the oath. The refractory priests were particularly numerous in the Vendée and the west of France, as well as in areas of the extreme north and east.

The conflict set many Catholics against the Revolution and, as the regime was threatened by war and rebellion, the feeling grew that all priests, perhaps even all Catholics, were enemies of the State. Patriots began to talk of abolishing religion altogether and the authorities instituted anti-religious measures. Streets called after saints were re-named, cemeteries were given the inscription 'Death is an eternal sleep', priests were encouraged to marry, and the familiar Christian calendar was replaced by a new Republican calendar, beginning with the year 1 and with new names for the days and months.

This process of de-Christianization, however, was too negative by itself. Religious ceremonies were needed to celebrate the Revolution and cement loyalty to it. Churches were turned into Temples of Reason, which was proclaimed as the Revolution's guiding principle. They were frequently dedicated 'to Philosophy' rather than to a saint, and their Christian statues and symbols were replaced by busts of Voltaire, Rousseau or contemporary Revolutionary leaders, while the figure of Liberty took the place of the Virgin Mary. Girls dressed in red, white and blue paraded as embodiments of Republican France. Not only Roman Catholics, but Lutherans and Calvinists, were forced to abandon Sunday worship (there were no Sundays in the Republican calendar) and organize their religious observances at intervals of ten days.

In April 1793 the Committe of Public Safety was appointed, with Robespierre as one of its members. He disapproved of the de-Christianization programme, which he believed encouraged irreligion and atheism. Like Rousseau, he maintained that the true worship of God was the religion of Nature, which would engender the morality and understanding required to create the ideal society.

Robespierre therefore launched a new cult of the Supreme Being, which was officially promulgated in May 1794 in a decree which committed the French people to recognizing the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. The best service of the Supreme Being was declared to consist of the conscientious practice of the duties of mankind, concern for the weak and the oppressed, and opposition to tyranny and treachery. A series of festivals was planned to commemorate significant dates in recent French history and to celebrate Nature. At a great festival in Paris Robespierre set light to a statue of Atheism and launched the reign of virtue.

Robespierre's overthrow soon afterward was followed in 1795 by the restoration of a degree of freedom to the Catholics. Liberty of religion was permitted, and Church and State were separated. This was the system which prevailed until Napoleon came to an agreement with the Pope in 1802.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON*

At Avignon, when he climbed onto a large stone to be worshipped the Devil turned into a great black goat; in the Savoy he turned into a black dog. The European witch mania had its early development largely in France

FRENCH WITCHCRAFT

THE PATTERN of witchcraft in Europe, as it emerged in the time of the great persecutions, combined two different ingredients. One was what could be called 'cottage-industry witchcraft', the use of spells and potions to work black magic or white. The second and newer ingredient was the belief that witches were the storm-troops of the Devil. The witch was now not a mere rustic wise-woman, who would provide a healing charm as readily as a poison (though this was what some of the accused witches may have been in reality). She – or he, there were plenty of male witches – was entirely dedicated to evil and had deliberately enlisted in the malevolent service of Satan (see EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS).

In its early days, this picture of witchcraft was developed largely in France. It drew heavily on the accusations made against earlier heretical sects, and it was confirmed by putting leading questions to accused witches and torturing them until they confessed. They were forced to name other people as witches, who were then interrogated and tortured in their turn. Through the confessions and the books in which the persecutors reported their experiences, a clear pattern of witch behaviour and witch beliefs was built up, a pattern which may have attracted some people to become witches of this type now widely recognized.

The central feature of the new witch religion was the sabbath, the meeting at which the Devil was worshipped (see SABBATH). From c1425 on, there was an extensive persecution in the Dauphine, spreading eastwards from Lyon to Grenoble and Briançon. One old man, Pierre Vallin, who was sentenced in 1438, confessed that he had given himself body and soul to the Devil long before. He had also given the Devil his baby daughter and the Devil had killed her. On the Devil's orders he used to stir up destructive storms by flailing the waters of a stream. He rode to the witch meetings on a stick and there copulated with the Devil, who took the form of a girl for the purpose.

The Form of a Black Cat

The anonymous *Errores Gazariorum* written c1450 in a French-speaking region of Savoy, gives a more detailed description of the sabbath. It says that a new recruit is taken to 'the synagogue' (an early name for the gathering) by someone who is already a witch. He is presented to the Devil, who takes the form of a man or an animal, usually a black cat. He swears an oath to be faithful to the witch society, to bring in new members, to reveal none of the society's secrets, to kill small children and bring their bodies to the synagogue, to avenge all injuries to the society and its members. After this he worships the Devil, kissing him under the tail. Then the witches feast and dance. The lights are put out and the Devil cries *Mestlet, mestlet* (mingle, mingle) and there is a promiscuous orgy. Before they leave, in mockery of the Eucharist, the witches urinate and evacuate in a cask.

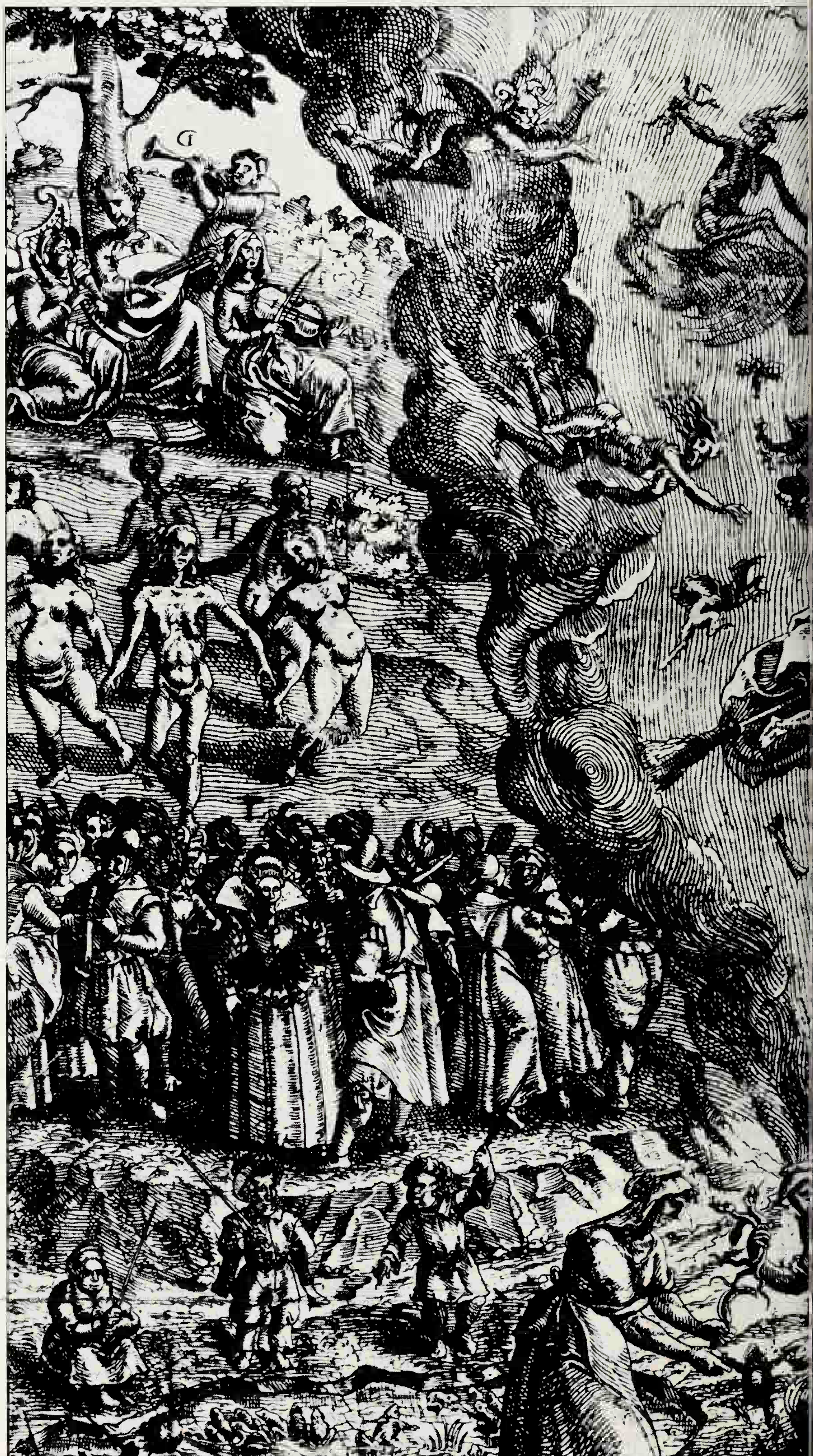
'In the name of the Devil, go!'

The confession of a woman named Antoine Rose, a witch of the Savoy who was tortured and tried in 1477, confirms this description and adds some extra details. The first time she was taken to the synagogue she saw many men and women there, enjoying themselves and dancing backwards. The Devil, whose name was Robinet, was a dark man who spoke in a hoarse voice.

Kissing Robinet's foot in homage, she renounced God and the Christian faith. He put his mark on her, on the little finger of her left hand, and gave her a stick, 18 inches long, and a pot of ointment. She used to smear the ointment on the stick, put it between her legs and say, 'Go, in the name of the Devil, go!' At once she would be carried through the air to the synagogue.

At the meeting the Devil would turn into a black dog which they all kissed, under the tail. He ordered them to do all the evil they could and gave them ointments and powders with which they could harm men and beasts. He also told them to worship him and not Christ, and not to adore the consecrated host in church but to spit it out. At one meeting a consecrated host was brought and they all trampled on it.

In 1452 a witch tried at Provins, near



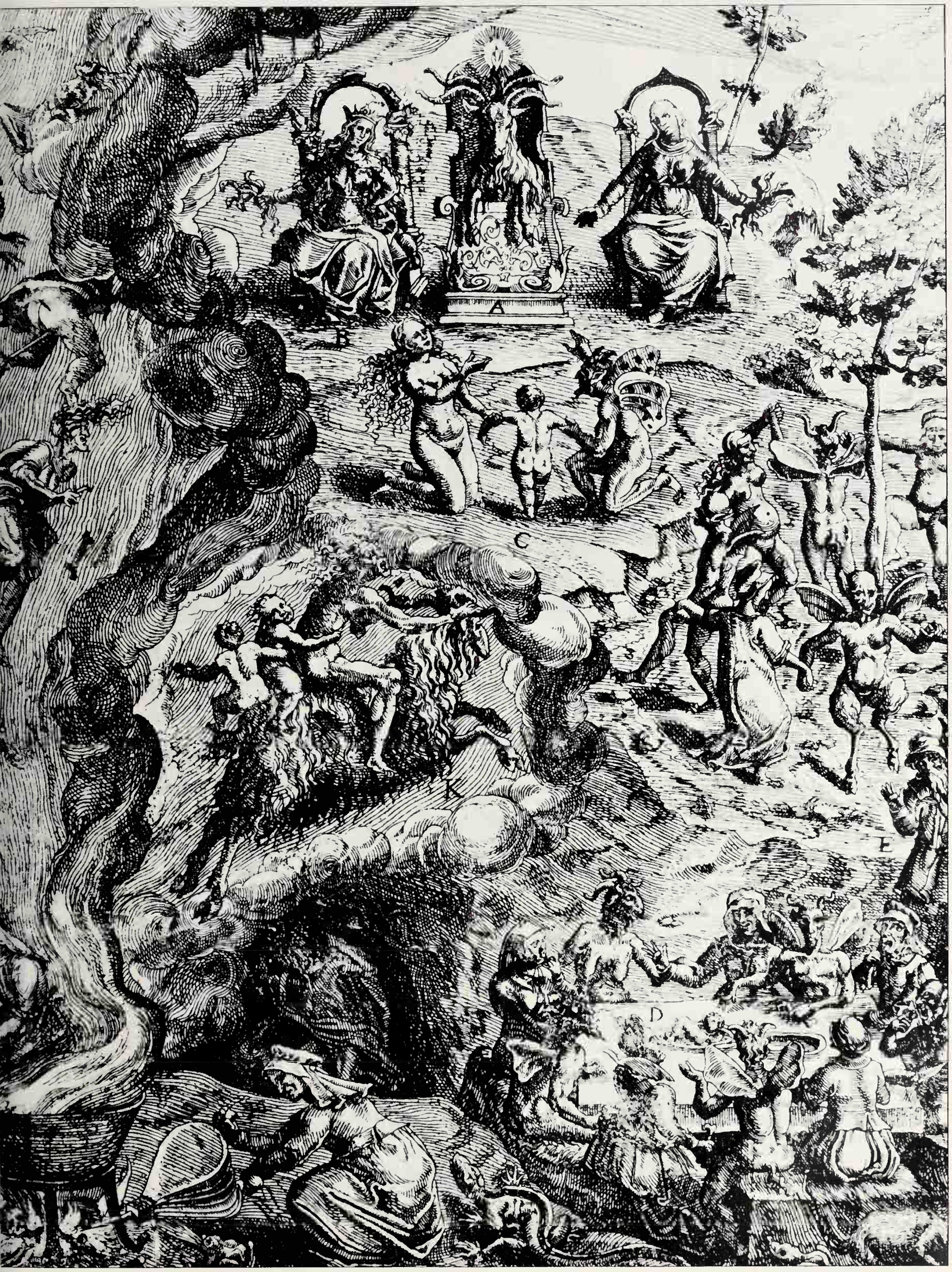
French magistrate and witch-finder Pierre de Lancre devoted the latter part of his life to energetically ferreting out evidence, real or imaginary, of devil-worship and witchcraft: he boasted of having consigned 600 witches to the flames. In his *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges (Description of the Faithlessness of Evil Angels)* he gives a first-hand account of his witch-hunt in the Basque region of France *Right* An illustration from the *Tableau* (1612) beneath which is de Lancre's description:

Satan is shown in the form of a goat preaching from a golden chair; the flame issuing from one of his five horns is to light the sabbath fires. On his right sits the Queen of the sabbath and kneeling before them a witch presents a child she has abducted. Partaking of the sabbath feast are witches and demons: only the meat of corpses, hanged men, hearts of unbaptized children and unclean animals never eaten by Christians are eaten. At the extreme right, poor witches who dare not approach the high ceremonies watch the festivities. After the banquet, the devils lead their neighbours beneath a cursed tree where, forming a ring facing alternately inward and outward, the company dance in the most indecent manner possible. At the left of the picture musicians play in accompaniment to the dancing and below them a troop of women and girls dance back to back in a circle. A group of noble lords and ladies mingle with rich and powerful witches who are disguised or masked to avoid recognition and who conduct the important business of the sabbath. During the sabbath, witches arrive on pitchforks and broomsticks, or on goats with their children whom they will present to Satan. Children with sticks, to prevent toads from getting out of a stream, assist witches to brew poisons: one witch holds serpents and toads, the other skins them and throws them in the pot.

Paris, said there were only 50 or 60 witches in all France, most of whom carried mirrors in their hats. Five people were promptly discovered with mirrors in their hats, and were arrested. A small boy said that his father and mother had twice taken him to witches' meetings and that if they were stripped and searched, a white mark, the size of a pea or bigger, would be found on their bodies – an early reference to the famous 'Devil's mark'.

The suggestion that there was only a handful of witches in France was contradicted by the poet Martin le Franc, who maintained that in the mountain valleys to the east and south of Briançon anything from 3000 to 10,000 people attended the sabbaths, and that more than 600 women had confessed to copulating with demons at these gatherings. Alphonsus de Spina, a convert from Judaism who became a Franciscan, wrote a book called *Fortalicium Fidei* in c1459, in which he says witches were particularly numerous in Dauphine and also in Gascony, where they met at a rock to worship a boar and kiss its backside. Many of them had been executed and in the house of the Inquisitor at Toulouse were paintings showing their meetings and the punishments inflicted on them.

This insistence, by so many persecutors, on the enormous numbers of witches helps



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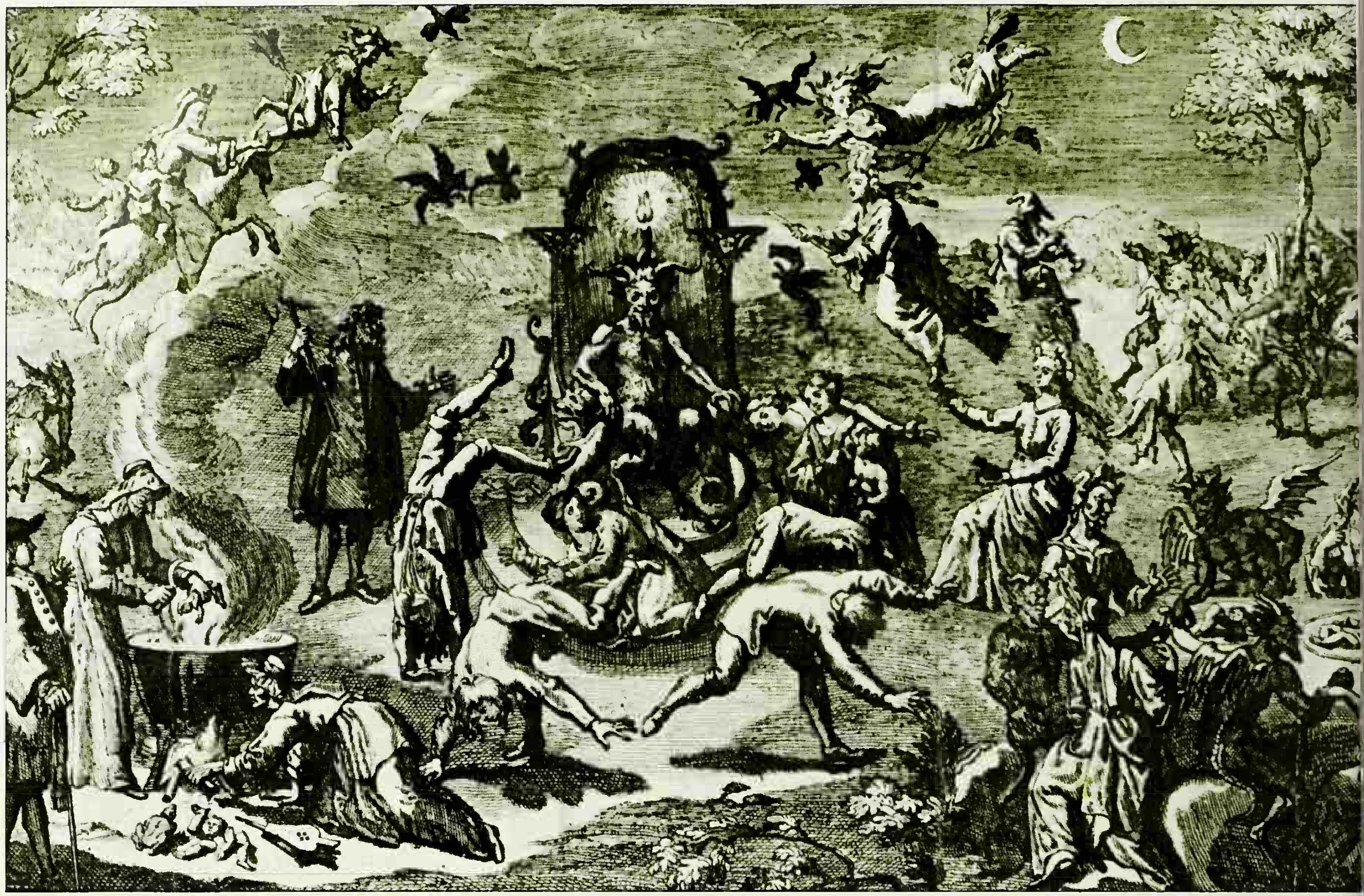

An etching of the witches sabbath from an 18th century French book *The History of the Ridiculous Extravagancies of M Oufle,* a parody of de Lancre's *Tableau*

to explain the growing fear of them and the cruelty with which they were treated. The American scholar H. C. Lea commented: 'The world was full of them and no one knew whether his family and friends or anyone whom he might meet was not a sorcerer gifted with the awful powers granted by the demon. That the terror was fantastic and imaginary did not render it less real and it accounts for the craze which devastated Europe in the 17th century.'

Another important factor was the belief, found in many primitive societies, that what we regard as accidents of Nature are not accidental at all but are caused by the malice of witches. At Metz in 1456 and 1457 witch-hunts were sparked off by unusually bad weather which harmed the crops. Again in 1488 a disastrously cold summer was put down to witchcraft at Metz, and 28 people were burned.

All sorts of natural misfortunes, from minor illnesses to the failure of a harvest, were lumped together as *maleficia* or 'evil doings', and attributed to witches. In 1460 Martin of Arles announced that all *maleficia* involved an implied agreement to serve the Devil. Nicholas Remy, author of *Demonolatreiae* (1595), maintained that, 'Whatever is not normal is due to the Devil.'

The Witches of Arras

The linking of witchcraft with the worship of the Devil was originally the work of the Inquisition and was later adopted by the secular courts, though in the 15th century civil courts in France were still sometimes dealing with cases of witchcraft without bringing the Devil and the sabbath into it at all. By contrast, when a number of witches were examined by the ecclesiastical authorities at Arras in 1460, the suspects were tortured into confessing that they worshipped the Devil and had attended the sabbath. Their master appeared to them in human form but he never showed his face. (Presumably, if he existed at all, he was a man with his head covered or wearing a mask.) He made them all give him the obscene kiss. They feasted luxuriously until all the lights went out and there was a wild orgy.

One of the accused had been cruelly beaten by the Devil when he threatened to leave the society. Another had attended many meetings, holding a lighted candle in the Devil's honour and kissing him under the tail, had signed in his own blood a formal pact making over his soul to the Devil, and had used powders and ointments to harm men and cattle.

Altogether, 34 suspects were arrested and 12 were executed. It is interesting that apparently very few people believed in their guilt. A hundred years later the weight of popular opinion would go the other way.

The first work on witchcraft to be written in French was an anonymous pamphlet of c 1460, *La Vauderye de Lyonois* (Vauderye from the heretical sect of Waldensians), describing trials at Lyons. The Devil appeared at the sabbath as a man with horns and talons or in a variety of animal forms, and he spoke in a harsh and terrifying voice. The meetings were usually held on Thursday nights. In church, witches would not cross themselves properly but would make a kind of circle. They turned their eyes away at the elevation of the host and took consecrated hosts to the sabbath to be contemptuously fouled.

Full Flood

Almost all the accusations about the witches' behaviour at the sabbath had earlier been made against the heretical sects – including the worship of the Devil, his animal forms, the obscene kiss, the violent hatred of Christianity, the cannibal eating of babies, the promiscuous orgy. In the early 14th century the Knights Templar were accused of worshipping the Devil; trampling on crucifixes, copulating with demons, and obscene kissing. In the 14th and 15th centuries there were various trials of important personages, notably Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais, in which accusations of witchcraft played a part and which helped to create popular belief in the prevalence of witches.

From the end of the 15th century the tide of persecution began to run at full flood. Year after year, suspects were nosed out, interrogated, agonizingly tortured and condemned. Forty witches were burned at 'oulouse in 1557, four at Poitiers in 1568, 8 at Avignon in 1582. In 1580 the olitical philosopher and witch judge Jean 3odin published *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*, in which he observed that burning ver a slow fire was an inadequate punishment for a witch, as it took only half an our or so.

In Lorraine Nicholas Remy condemned 00 witches in a few years after 1581. 'here were witch-hunts in Normandy etween 1589 and 1594, and again etween 1600 and 1645. In Burgundy Ienri Boguet exterminated some 600 vitches and wrote the famous *Discours des Sorciers* (1602) which went through 12 ditions in 20 years. In 1609 Pierre de ancre descended on the Basque-speaking rovinces north of the Pyrenees and claimed have executed 600 witches in four nonths (see BASQUE WITCHCRAFT).

In the 17th century there was a rash of utbreaks of supposed demonic possession n convents (see articles on possession). taggering confessions of witchcraft and eviltry were poured out by hysterical uns. Some of these ravings were so mprobable that they helped to undermine elief in the reality of witchcraft.

By about the middle of the 17th century he tide had turned. Occasional trials ccurred down into the 18th century and elief in the old-fashioned type of witchraft lingered on in country districts. As ate as 1885 at Sologne a suspected witch vas burned alive by her daughter and on-in-law. But the virtual end of the ersecution of witchcraft as the Devil's eligion came in 1670, when Louis XIV eprieved 12 witches who had been conemned at Rouen, commuting their death entences to banishment from the province, nd restoring the property which had been onfiscated from them. A royal edict of 682 helped to put witchcraft back into s much older category of 'superstitious ractices' and 'pretended magic'.

'he Devil's Mass

'he Devil was the witches' god, and de ancre said that they would go down on heir knees to him and hail him as 'Great ord, whom I adore'. A new member of the ociety would say to the Devil, 'I put myself ntirely in your power and into your hands, ecognizing no other god, for you are my god.' According to Boguet, before they began their feast the witches said a kind of grace, 'but with words full of blasphemy, making Beelzebub the author and protector of all things.'

A witch named Antide Colas confessed in 1598 that, 'Satan ordered her to pray to him night and morning, before she set about doing anything else.' According to Silvain Nevillon, tried at Orleans in 1614, 'they say to the Devil, we recognize you as our master, our God, our Creator.'

Since witchcraft had been identified as worship of the Devil, it was naturally a stock accusation that witches consciously and formally renounced the Christian faith. De Lancre quoted a girl of 16, named Jeannette d'Abadie, who said that she was made to renounce and deny her Creator, the holy Virgin, the saints, her baptism, her father and mother and family, heaven, earth and everything there is in the world.' She also said that she saw the children of witches being enrolled in the Devil's service by baptism at the sabbath. Silvain Nevillon said that the witches baptized babies and anointed their heads with oil, muttering phrases in Latin.

The belief that the witches perverted the Mass into a ceremony in the Devil's honour followed naturally enough from their notorious detestation of Christianity. Boguet said that the celebrant was an apostate priest who wore a black cope with no cross on it. Instead of the host he consecrated a piece of turnip stained black, and the congregation cried out, 'Master, help us!' At Aix-en-Provence, Madeleine de Demandolx accused the priest Louis Gaufridi (see AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS) of inventing the saying of Mass at the sabbath, consecrating the elements to Lucifer and sprinkling the wine on the worshippers, who responded with 'His blood be upon us and our children.'

Silvain Nevillon said that the sabbath was held in a house and he saw there a tall dark man, reading in an inaudible mumble from a book which had black and crimson leaves. Presently he elevated a black host and then a chalice of cracked pewter, 'all foul and filthy'. Another witch of Orleans, Gentien le Clerc, described how the Devil himself said the Mass. He wore a chasuble on which was a broken cross, and turned his back on the altar when elevating a black host and a black chalice. He muttered the words of the service from a book, bound in some soft and hairy material like a wolf's skin, and with red, white and black leaves. (See also BLACK MASS.)

The Black Goat

The Devil frequently appeared to his followers in animal form, and especially as a goat (see also GOAT). At Poitiers in 1574 he was 'a great black goat who spoke like a person.' At Avignon, when he climbed onto a large stone to be worshipped, he turned himself into a great black goat, though normally he appeared as a man. In Puy de Dôme in 1594 he was a black goat with a candle between his horns. He might also show himself as a dog or a cat, a bull or a stag, or even as a pig or a sheep. Many of the descriptions suggest a man wearing a mask and an animal's skin.

The Devil also very often appeared in human form. In 1567 a witch of Amou in the southwest said that they all danced round a great stone on which sat a great black man, whom they called Monsieur. Françoise Secretain in 1598 said that the Devil was a great black man. Barthélemy Minguet of Brécy, tried in 1616, said that he saw the Devil at the sabbath 'in the shape of a man, who held a horse by its bridle, and that they went forward to worship him, each one holding a pitch candle of black wax in their hands.'

How much truth there is in these accounts, and in all the descriptions of the sabbath, is very hard to determine. It is clear that hundreds of innocent people were harried and tormented into confessing anything whatever that was demanded of them. But it seems quite likely that among the hordes of the innocent there may also have been a few who were guilty.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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The Black Book of Death

From the sentence pronounced against witches at Avignon, 1582:

. . . you and each of you have renounced the one and triune God, the creator of us all, and have worshipped the merciless Devil, the old enemy of the human race . . . in pledge of the faith professed in the demon you have given him a fragment of your garments; and in order that your name should be removed and obliterated from the Book of Life, by the command of the Father of Lies, with your own hand you have placed your sign in the black book of perpetual death and of the reproved and damned; and, in order that he might bind you more firmly to such great infidelity and impiety, he branded each of you with his mark or stigma, as being his own property . . . you and each of you have bound yourselves by oath to obey his orders and commands, trampling on the cross and the sign of the Lord; and in obedience to him, mounted on a staff and with your thighs anointed with a certain most execrable unguent prescribed to you by the said Devil, you have been carried through the air . . . to the appointed spot on certain days, and there, in the synagogue . . . by the light of a noisome fire, after many jubilations, dancings, feastings, drinkings and games in honour of the presiding Beelzebub, prince of demons, in the form and appearance of a most black and filthy goat, you have adored him as God, by acts and words . . . asking his aid to punish all your enemies and those who refuse you anything, and, taught by him, inflicting revenge, injuries and enchantments on men and beasts . . . you men have fornicated with succubi, you women with incubi . . . And what is the most detestable of all, when you receive the most august sacrament of the Eucharist in the church, by instruction of the said serpent ejected from paradise, you have retained it in your mouths and nefariously spit it out on the ground so as to insult our true and holy God . . .

H. C. Lea *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*

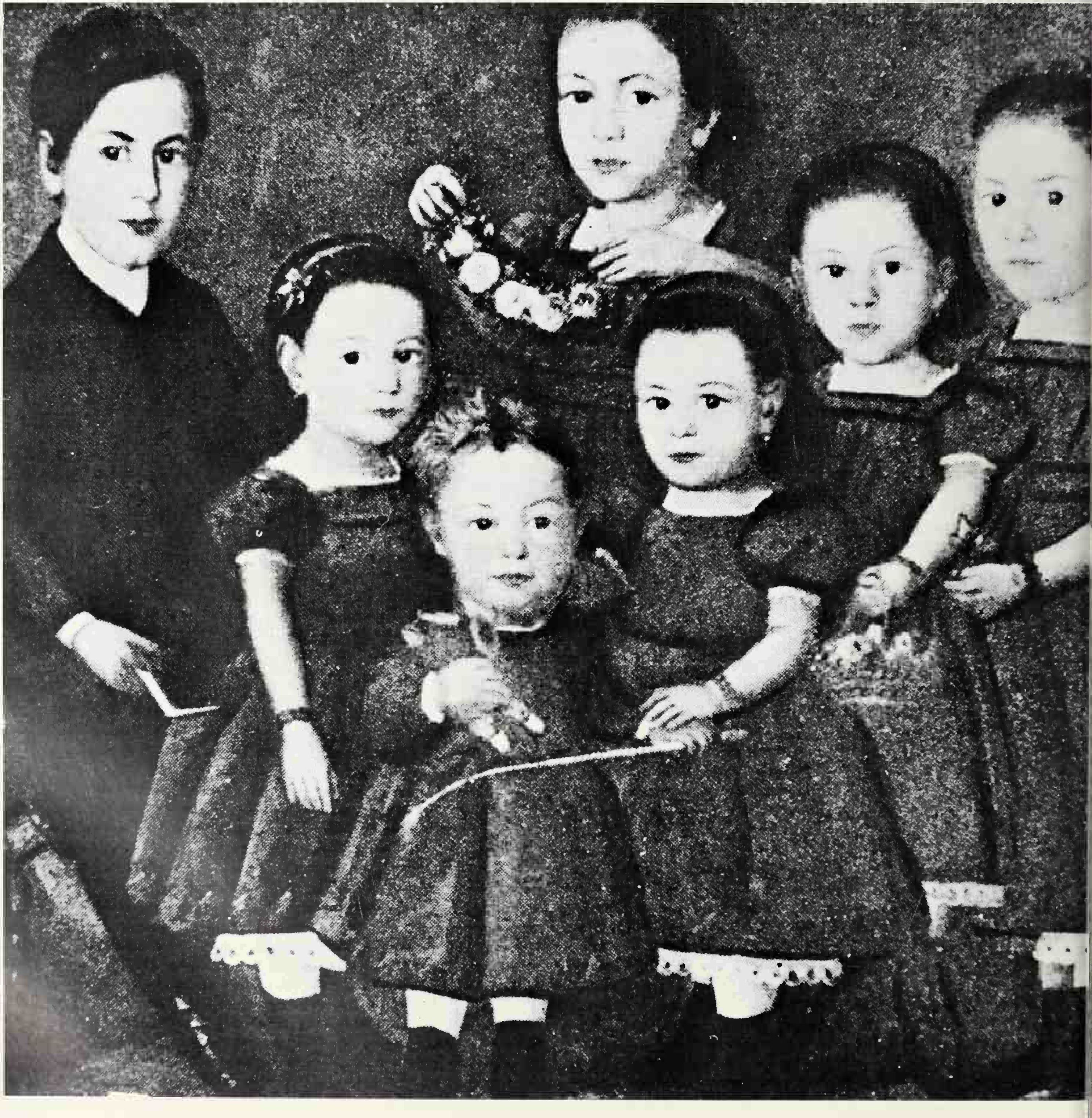
The artist, the mystic and the occultist are in touch intuitively with the hidden recesses of the mind: Freud developed a scientific method of exploring the unconscious which has influenced every aspect of contemporary life

FREUD

THE FATHER of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud can be ranked with Darwin and Einstein as one of the giants of the last 200 years whose work has radically changed Western concepts about the human animal, his environment and the relationship between the two. The extent to which Freud revolutionized conventional thought is apparent in the way in which it is now axiomatic that there are large regions of the mind of which people are normally quite unconscious, yet which have a direct influence on their conscious behaviour. And yet in the 19th century it was equally generally accepted that a person's character could be adequately deduced purely from his outward actions and behaviour. When in the 1890s Freud dared to uncover hidden motivations and when moreover he linked these with sexual drives, his ideas were immediately attacked for being not only impossible but indecent.

This attitude, although deeply rooted at the time, has not always been the accepted one. The phenomenon of man's ignorance of the unconscious aspects of the mind, in terms of the whole of human history, is brief aberration. To understand wha happens at these normally unconsciou levels has never been easy, but the fa that these levels do exist has seldom bee so steadfastly ignored as it was at th period. For several centuries Europe ha forgotten almost as thoroughly as if it ha never known what the religious, mystic and esoteric schools of East and West ha always taught: that invisible and subt levels of perception, even if not consciou

A painting of Sigmund Freud at the age of 1 with his younger brother and five sisters. A a young doctor specializing in neurology, h isolated a cerebral paralysis in children whic was later named after him



n influence human behaviour and states mind; that the consciousness of these btler or more fruitful perceptions can be scured by a fog compounded of selfish- ss, fear, and wilfully immature demands the personality; that dreams are messages om those unconscious regions of the mind nose myths and symbols embody instruc- e material which can dispel the fog.

This has been the concern of various -called religious and mystical schools roughout human history and this sentially is the nature of Freud's contribu- on. Considered from this point of view, erefore, Freud was not the innovator and ventor of the ideas which have so capti- ted and caged 20th century thought, but s achievement was rather to re-introduce rtain concepts which had been forgotten d, most important, to be the first man to d a way to scientifically explore the rking of the human mind.

earch for the Inner Mind

gmund Freud was born at Freiberg, oravia, in 1856, the son of an unsuccess- l Jewish wool merchant. He spent most his life in Vienna, but in 1938 when the azis annexed Austria he escaped to ndon where he died in 1939 at the age 83. He studied to be a doctor and ecialized in neurology, making a name himself by isolating a form of paralysis, er called after him, and by the co- scovery of the local anaesthetic effects of caine. But in 1884 he became interested the therapeutic uses of hypnosis, upon ich he was to build his theories of ychoanalysis. In 1895 he and his colleague sef Breuer published *Studies in Hysteria*, which the two men examined the results work in which they had used hypnosis probe the minds of their patients. At the ne this was a remarkably humane proach to hysteria, which was normally eated with a brutal lack of sympathy.

Shortly after the publication of this ok, Freud quarrelled with Breuer and ntinued his researches alone. He gave the use of hypnosis in favour of 'free sociation', in which patients were asked relax on a couch and say whatever came to their minds, however absurd, unpleasant obscene it might appear by everyday andards. When that was done it seemed at powerful emotional drives swept the controlled thoughts towards the area of ychological conflict. Great relief – tharsis' – seemed to follow and Freud ticed that frequently forgotten and pain- memories were found to relate to un- easant, buried sexual experiences in ildhood.

At about this time he also discovered a itful source of emotionally significant eas in his patients' dreams, and decided at there must be some truth in the cient theory that dreams had symbolic eaning and that they appeared to be sguised forms of repressed desires and eds. 'Instead of dreaming about a penis,' ites G. A. Miller in his recent book *ychology*, 'the dreamer may substitute image of a gun, a snake, a fountain pen, number three, and so on. For masturbation the dream symbol may be climbing a tree or playing the piano. By recognizing these substitutions, therefore, it is possible to recover the true meaning of the dream.'

This passage indicates well the particular prejudice through which Freud filtered many of his ideas. The over-emphasis on sexual interpretation which he gave to almost every human motive from infancy onwards may in fact have been the product of his own personal obsession; colleagues and contemporaries have noted that Freud himself was a puritanical and inhibited man. Perhaps he exaggerated partial truth to look like a universal state of affairs, and he would have been encouraged in this by having to contend with the sexual repressions of the times.

In the summer of 1897, after the death of his father, Freud decided to apply to himself the techniques he had formulated. Using his own dreams as the principal source of study, he worked to discover the unconscious processes which were responsible for forming them. He published his major account of this work in 1900 in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and it took eight years to sell the first 600 copies. Apart from a small group of 'disciples' no one seemed interested, yet today this book is considered his most important work, and the final chapter contains the theory of the human mind which he was to amplify and develop in the period ahead.

The practice of free association had led him to make discoveries about various psychoneuroses which threw light on the workings of the normal mind. The three most fundamental were: the existence of the unconscious and its effect on the conscious; the splitting of the mind into layers as the result of internal conflict, the most important of which is repression; and the existence and importance of infantile sexuality, producing a sexual attitude towards its parents, with its accompanying jealousy and hostility, which he termed the Oedipus complex, from the ancient Greek myth of Oedipus.

In his early work Freud used a simple twofold distinction between the conscious and unconscious mind. Later he described the total personality as organized into three major systems – the id, concerned with the funnelling of energies and tensions; the ego, which is the administrative, daily self which deals with the interactions of the personality with the environment; and the superego, which represents the conscious, or the moral aspects of the personality, which passes judgements. Towards the end of his life Freud formulated two groups of instincts which provide energy for the id. One served the purposes of life and growth, and was called the libido. The second arose in the service of death – the 'death wish'.

The unconscious automatically 'represses' knowledge or feelings which upset the conscious mind, without necessarily being harmful to the personality. In some cases however, the repression seeks an outlet in a different form, frequently some type of inconsistent or unstable behaviour. The function of psychoanalysis in this case is to uncover and release the repression.

By the amplification of his elaborate theory on the development and maturing of the sexual instincts, he forced people to examine the idea that sex does not suddenly appear at puberty, but exists from infancy. He believed that the child's sexual gratifications came from different areas – 'erogenous zones' – at different ages, and that in unfortunate circumstances a child can become 'fixed' at an infantile stage, and by so doing develop personality traits corresponding to that particular level.

Freud and the Cabala

Although philosophers and poets in the past had guessed at the existence of the unconscious (indeed ten years before Freud's birth, Karl Carus, court physician to the King of Saxony, had stated that the key to the understanding of the life of the mind would be found in the region of the unconscious), Freud, with his techniques of dream analysis, free association, attention to symbolism and probing for buried memories was the first to discover a method of exploring this area. But undoubtedly his ideas were subject to influences in the climate of his time, including many forces which were later to be labelled 'Freudian'.

There was another more specific and powerful influence in his own background: the tradition of Jewish mysticism and the Cabala (see CABALA). David Bakan, in *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* says:

> Freud often wrote with obscurity . . . motivated consciously or unconsciously to hide the deeper portions of his thought, and these deeper portions were Kabbalistic in their source and content. The Kabbalistic tradition has it that the secret teachings are to be transmitted orally to one person at a time, and even then only to selected minds by hints. This indeed is what Freud was doing in the actual practice of psychoanalysis, and this aspect of the Kabbalistic tradition is still maintained in the education of the modern psychoanalyst.

Bakan attempts to show that many of Freud's unacknowledged sources were Cabalistic. He quotes a passage of the *Zohar*, a Jewish mystical book of the 13th century, and sets it next to a passage of Freud's work, pointing out as he does so that the differences between the two texts are readily explicable in terms of Freud's own theories of substitution and symbolism.

But even if Freud had been conscious of the role that Jewish mysticism played in his work, as Bakan points out there were excellent reasons for not specifying the tradition. 'Anti-semitism' he writes, 'was so widespread and intense at the time that to indicate the Jewish sources of his ideas would have dangerously exposed an intrinsically controversial theory to unnecessary and possibly fatal opposition.'

Certainly, although Freud's theories were unequivocally materialistic and nothing approaching mysticism was allowed to disorder the psychoanalytic scheme of things, Freud himself showed an interest in subjects such as telepathy and extra-sensory perception. He looked for prophetic dream in his patients – though found none – an was fascinated by the meaningful recurrenc of certain numbers in his life. Severa interchanges between Jung and Ferencz men who were more interested in the occu than Freud, suggest that he may have cu short a growing fascination for the mysteriou and magical because it would have interfere with the organization of his own theorie: Indeed in a letter late in life to the psychica researcher Hereward Carrington, Freu went so far as to say: 'If I had my life t live over again I should devote myself t psychical research rather than psych analysis.'

Apart from restoring the idea of th unconscious to Western culture, Freud other important contribution was to produc a technical vocabulary more acceptable t his time – 'repressions' and 'complexe rather than 'devils' and 'spells' – with whic to begin to isolate concepts and mental 'set which folklore and superstition encompasse but did not understand.

After the initial derision and oppositic Freud's concepts became so cemented int the structure of contemporary thought tha it was difficult to be sure if any concep was entirely uninfluenced by his ideas. The permeated everything, for the ideas h tapped were potent, and inevitably we not contained within the confines of medicir and mental disorders, which were h special field. They spread into every sphe of contemporary life, and influenced th way in which Western society came regard the arts, the social sciences, soci reform, child rearing, and every proble regarding human relationships.

It is only recently that it has becon much clearer that Freud's explanations c not account satisfactorily for all hum needs; that though his insights ar techniques can be valuable, a deeper hum hunger seems to lie underneath the leve of being with which he is concerned. Jur showed almost contemporaneously wi Freud that if there are many things in o own personalities we are unconscious c there are also lying beneath these, as were, vast unknown areas which we ho in common.

(See also DREAMS; JUNG.)

PAT WILLIAM

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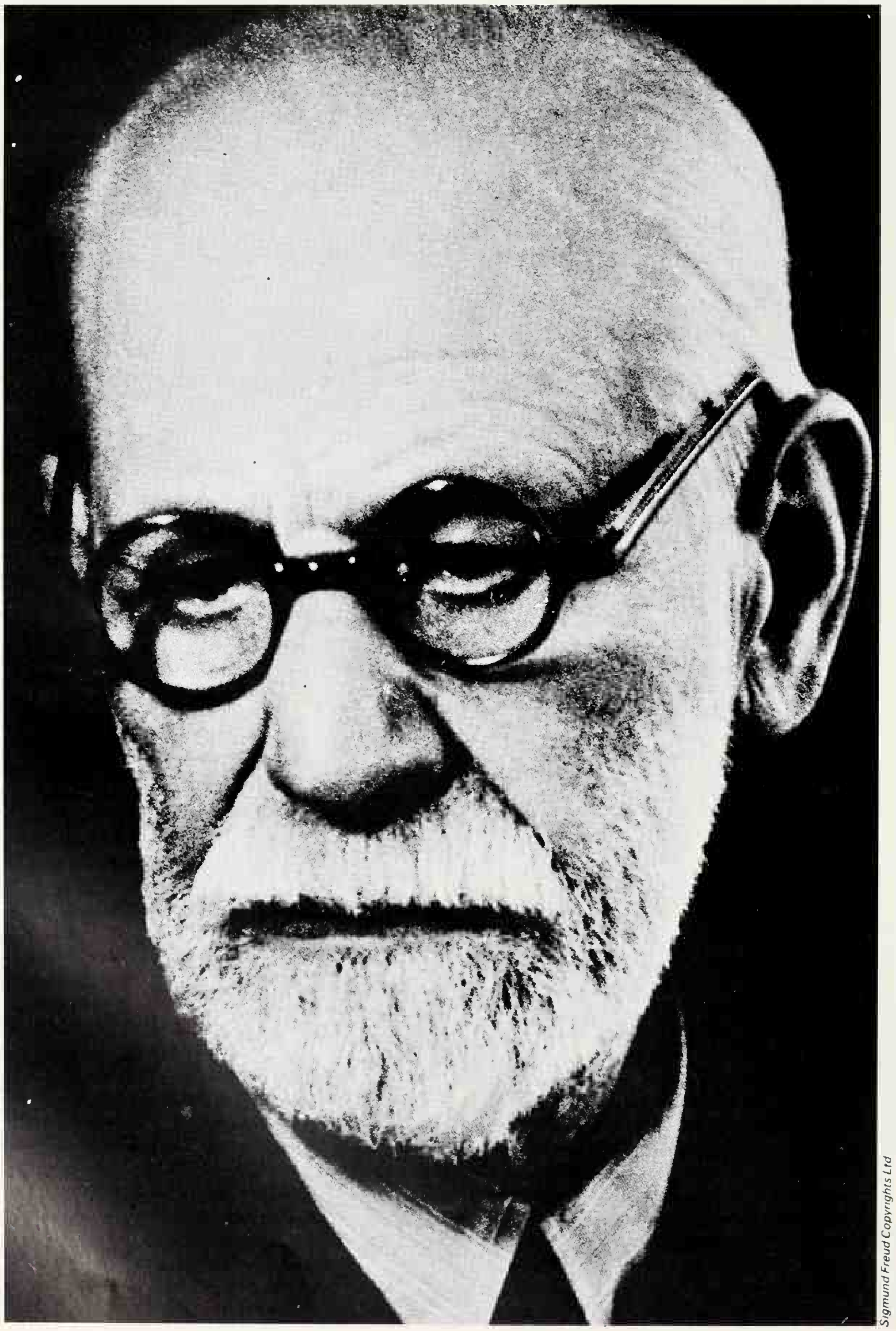
Freud and the Jewish Mystics

We find a conception of sexuality which is startlingly close to Freud's in the Kabbalistic tradition . . . Never in the Jewish tradition was sexual asceticism made a religious value. The commandment to be fruitful and multiply was always taken extremely seriously in both rabbinical and mystical traditions. In contrast with other ascetic forms of mysticism, the Jewish mystics ascribed sexuality to God himself. The Jewish Kabbalist saw in sexual relations between a man and his wife a symbolic fulfilment of the relationship between God and the Shekinah . . . It is to be noted that the ideal form of sexuality is conceived of as heterosexual, and in particular as realized in marriage. Marital sexuality becomes the symbol of creativity. Thus Freud's use of the idiom of sexuality as the basic one for the expression of all the deeper and more profound problems of mankind is entirely in the spirit of the Kabbala.

David Bakan,
Signund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition



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'If I had my life to live over again I shou devote myself to psychical research rather th to psychoanalysis': photo of Freud in 1938

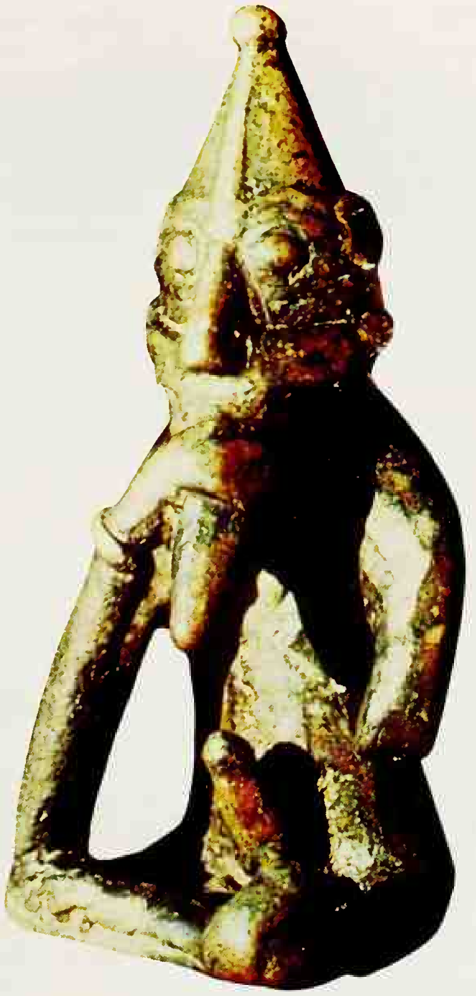
n Scandinavian mythology the gods and oddesses associated with fertility and peace ere the Vanir: amoral deities concerned not ith justice or morality but with bringing new fe and power into the world

FREYR, FREYJA, FRIGG

RCHEOLOGICAL REMAINS give us little elp in visualizing these members of the candinavian community of gods and godesses, since the only recognizable image urviving from the Viking Age is a little hallic figure in a pointed cap from Rallinge n Sweden, presumably an amulet, which is hought to represent the god Freyr. The oddesses go unrepresented, although their nfluence permeates the myths, and their ymbols and those of Freyr are found connuously in pagan art. There is no doubt of ne importance of these deities, and the nedieval Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluon who collected many of the surviving nyths, declared that Freyja alone of the gods till remained alive.

Freyr and Freyja were said to be the twin hildren of the Njörd, the god associated ith fertility and the sea. They belonged o the group known as the Vanir, the deities f fertility, who were distinguished from the esir, the group to which Odin and Thor elonged. Frigg was the wife of Odin, occupyng in the late myths the position of Queen f Heaven. It is not very easy however to ifferentiate her from Freyja. Both goddeses were invoked in child-bearing, both could y in bird form, both were called weeping oddesses, and both were renowned as ivers of good gifts to mankind. It seems as f they may represent different aspects of the ncient, ambivalent goddess of the earth ho gave fruitfulness, and who ruled the ealm of the dead. She was worshipped in candinavia from the Neolithic period, and mall figurines of a woman with bare breasts, lad in a short skirt and neck-ring and with er hair in a plait, survive from the late ronze Age, about a thousand years before hrist. In the myths of the Viking Age – rom about the 9th century AD – Frigg ppears primarily as wife and mother, while reyja is the mistress of gods and men like, accused of taking lovers everywhere nd greatly desired by the giants. Possibly he older, Germanic Frija, wife of Wodan, ho has given her name to Friday, was the redecessor of both goddesses.

Although we know little of Frija, one nteresting myth about her has survived from n early chronicle of the Lombards, the *Origo entis Langobardum*, used by Paul the eacon in the 8th century AD. Here Frija ersuades her husband by a trick to give a ame to the tribe who sought her help. She urned Wodan's bed to face the east, and hen told the people to come out at sunrise, he women with their long hair hanging over he faces. 'Who are these Longbeards?' sked Wodan in surprise, and since he had estowed a name on them, he was bound to ive them the gift of victory that went along ith it. There are similar stories of Frigg ersuading Odin to support her suppliants, and it was said that she sent an apple to King Rerir, the founder of the Volsung race, when he sat upon a burial mound and besought her for a son: he shared the apple with his wife and the hero Volsung was born. The most important myth involving Frigg concerns the death of her son Balder. At his birth she sought to protect him from harm by extracting a pledge from all created things not to hurt him but she overlooked the humble mistletoe that was finally instrumental in killing him. After his death she called on all the world to weep for him so that he might return from the realm of the dead. This is perfectly in accord with the widespread and ancient pattern of the Earth-Mother Goddess lamenting over her dead son found in many parts of the ancient Mediterranean world (see BALDER).



Historiska Museet, Stockholm

In Norse mythology, Freyr was the god of peace, prosperity and fruitfulness, and there was a close link between the god and the king of the pagan community: grotesque Viking statue thought to represent Freyr

Goddess of Giving

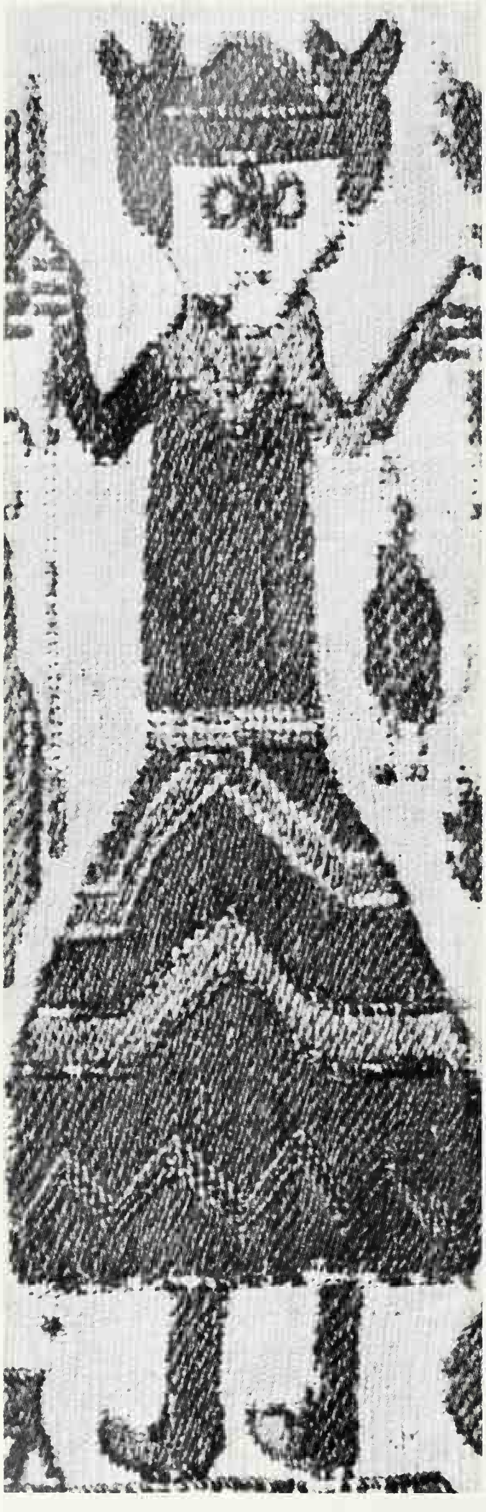
In the late Viking age however Frigg is overshadowed in the myths by the more vivid character of Freyja, called the bride of Vanir. Her name means 'Lady' while that of her twin brother and consort Freyr means 'Lord', and it is made clear that she was worshipped under many different names. Some, like Gefn, emphasize her as a Goddess of Giving and others suggest an association with crops or with the sea. The giantess Gefion, who turned her sons into giant oxen to plough round the peninsula of Swedish Zealand and make it into an island to give to her Danish people, probably represents another aspect of the same goddess of fertility, associated with the sea as well as the underworld. Idun, guardian of the apples of eternal youth which kept old age away from the gods, and which were once stolen by the giants with fearful results, may well be yet another personification of the same deity.

Freyja's famous treasure was her necklace (thought by some to have been a girdle) named Brisingamen, and this has been an attribute of the goddess since the Bronze Age. There is a story of how she obtained it from the four cunning dwarfs who made it, paying for her acquisition by sleeping a night with each in turn, and of how Loki stole it from her by entering her bower in the form of a fly, so that Odin could make use of it to strike a bargain with Freyja.

Freyr had his own ship, Skipbladnir, said to be large enough to hold all the gods, but small enough to fold away into a pouch when not in use. Tales of a supernatural boat which could travel with incredible speed may be linked with this magic vessel of the gods. There is a widespread tradition also of a boat which carries a divine child across the sea to become the founder of a kingdom, found in the opening section of the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, and this tradition too seems to be associated with the Vanir. The practice of ship-burial, when the dead man or woman was laid on a boat in the grave, or burnt in one on the funeral pyre, seems to have been part of the Vanir cult. (See BEOWULF.) Horses, pigs and birds, all creatures associated with the fertility deities, were slain at the great ship funerals in Norway and Sweden in the Viking Age, while the seedcorn, hazel nuts and apples found in the Oseberg ship burial of the late 9th century are typical symbols of fruitfulness. It has indeed been suggested that the young woman buried with great pomp at Oseberg may have been a priestess of the Vanir. A beautiful little carved wagon was found buried with her, recalling the famous description by Tacitus of the journey of the goddess of fertility through parts of Denmark in the 1st century AD. He calls her Nerthus or Mother Earth, and describes her journey in a wagon unseen by men, bringing prosperity and respite from war and welcomed everywhere by the people. The resemblance between the name Nerthus and that of Njörd, father of Freyja, provides us with what may have been an earlier pair of deities of the fertility cult.

Sacrifice of Horses

Freyr and Freyja owned a golden boar, named Gollinborsti or Goldbristles, reckoned among the treasures of the gods. The boar was a widespread symbol of the pagan period, especially on helmets, since it was thought to protect the worshippers of the Vanir in battle (see BOAR). One such helmet, surmounted by a gilded boar with gold studs for bristles and ruby eyes, has survived from the Anglo-Saxon burial mound at Benty Grange in Derbyshire, and similar helmets are pictured on metal plates from 6th century



Frigg, the Norse mother goddess and protectress, appears with the gods Thor and Wotan on a detail from the 12 century Swedish tapestry of Skog in Hälsingland, in the Stockholm Historical Museum

Eugen Kusch

Sweden. The early kings of Sweden possessed helmets with names like 'Battle Boar', and these may have been used as boar masks in ceremonies connected with the Vanir.

The horse was also sacred to the Vanir, and there are references to horses sacrificed to Freyr, and of a horse dedicated to the god by its owner, which no man was allowed to ride. This forms the theme of one of the famous Icelandic sagas, that of Hrafnkel, priest of Freyr, and while this is not a historical account, it probably preserves partly remembered traditions of earlier customs. There is every indication that the horse sacrifice, a regular ritual for centuries over a large stretch of Europe and Asia where horse-rearing played an important part in men's lives, was an essential rite in the cult of the Vanir. We have an account of Hakon the Good, the first Christian king of Norway, attempting to avoid the ceremony but being forced to conform by the people, and this describes the king presiding at the sacrifice, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the slaughtered animal. The custom of horse-fighting, described in the sagas and also shown on early memorial stones, may have formed part of the sacrificial ritual.

There was a close link between Freyr and the king of the pagan community, and ancestor kings in their burial mounds, like those at the sacred place at Old Uppsala in Sweden, appear at times to be identified with the god. Freyr was said to have been carried round the land to bring blessing to his people after death, before he was laid in a mound and the same is told of King Frod of Denmark, an early ruler whose reign was represented as a golden age. The name Frod was apparently borne by many Danish kings, and seems to have been another title of the Vanir god, possibly meaning 'fruitful'.

Orgies and Ecstasies

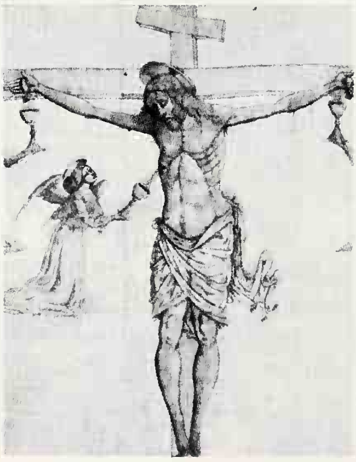
The main emphasis in the Vanir cult was on the maintaining of the existing order, and in particular of the seasonal round which brought new life and food to sustain it. Men turned to the Vanir for help by divination and Freyja's name is associated with one particular divination rite, that of *seid* which she was said to have taught to th gods. This was usually performed by woman known as a *völva* or seeress, wh sat on a high platform and fell into a tranc induced by the singing of spells, after whic she answered questions on certain aspect of the future, particularly about the comin season or the destinies of children. *Seid* could also be a dangerous activity, used t bring harm and even death to others. Ther was one type of horse sacrifice too, when th skull and sometimes the whole carcass o the horse was raised on a pole and used as hostile rite against an enemy. Such practices as these no doubt belong to the darke side of the Vanir cult, hinted at but seldo clearly defined in the literature, which led t bitter condemnation by the Church. Th Vanir were indeed amoral deities, concerne not with justice nor morality nor the keepin of oaths, but essentially with the bringing o new life and power into the world. Thi power might be put to good or evil purpose and such life-bringing deities are alway worshipped in strange, even revoltin forms, with orgies, ecstasies and sacrifici rites. To some extent the cult would seem t rival that of Odin, god of magic, ecstasy an the dead, and the myth of the war betwee the Aesir and the Vanir, which ended in truce may be based on this. Thus it was tha Freyr and Njörd came to Asgard to join th Aesir, while both sides spat into a bowl t symbolize their agreement, and with it contents fashioned the wise giant Kvasi from whose blood was formed one of th greatest treasures of gods and men, th mead of inspiration. Indeed the three mai cults, those of Odin, Thor and the Vani between them covered the main needs an concerns of men, and while there was som overlapping and occasionally enmity betwee them, the picture as a whole is one of acceptance, and of the gods dwelling peaceabl side by side, in accordance with the myth. (See also BALDER; GERMAN MYTHOLOG ODIN.)

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSO

FURTHER READING: H. R. Ellis Davidso *Gods and Myths of Northern Europ* (Penguin, 1964); *Pagan Scandinavi* (Thames & Hudson, 1967); E. O. G Turville Petre, *Myth and Religion of th North* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964).

Friday

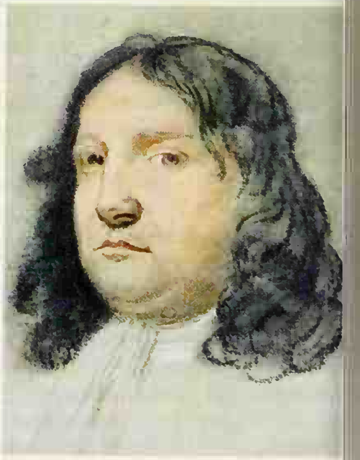
Day of the week named after the Germanic goddess Frija, wife of Wodan: it has particularly grim associations for Christians as the day on which Christ was crucified: it was long customary for Christians to eat no meat on Fridays; traditionally an unlucky day on which to put to sea or get married, but lucky for those born on Friday, for 'Friday's child is loving and giving'.
See DAYS AND HOURS.

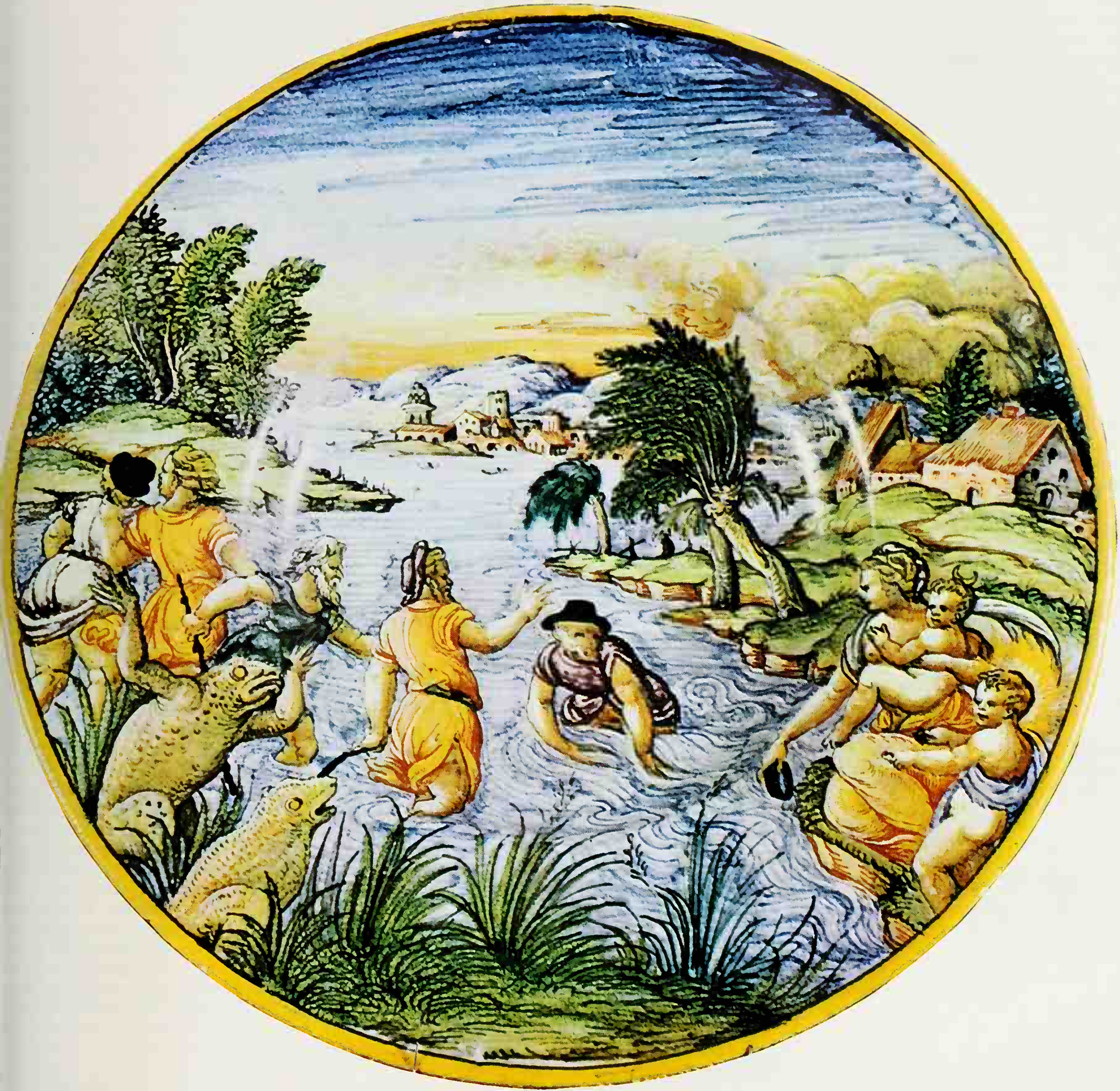


Sotheby & Co

Friends, Society of

Commonly called Quakers, a Christian sect founded in England in the 17th century by George Fox: members believe that the light of Christ shines in the heart of every individual and is revealed in experience rather than dogma; meetings are conducted in silent prayer in which all share, and there is no formal service or ordained minister: many Quakers emigrated to America in the 17th century, among them William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania.
See FOX.





lthough the frog is said to be the enemy of the oon and the greedy devourer of the earth's aters, his medicinal properties are widely valued

FROG

N MYTHOLOGY, the frog appears comparaively rarely but, when he does, he seems to voke either extreme repulsion or respect. The ancient Jews, for instance, regarded him ith abhorrence. In the book of Revelation, even angels 'pour out on the earth the seven owls of the wrath of God'; when the sixth oes so, 'three foul spirits like frogs' appear; emonic spirits, performing signs'.

The Jewish attitude to frogs doubtless goes back to the early days of their culture, when these creatures were called up by Moses and Aaron as the second plague of Egypt (Exodus, chapter 8). The Egyptians themselves, on the other hand, clearly regarded the frog in quite a different light: Heket, their gentle goddess of childbirth, had the head (and sometimes the entire form) of a frog and, in a variant of the Egyptian myth of the creation of the world, she and her ram-headed husband Khnum were the first to 'build men and make gods'.

The frog also plays an important part in a central Asian creation myth, in which Otshirvani the creator and his assistant Chagan-Shukuty came down from heaven and saw a frog playing in the primeval waters. Chagan-Shukuty picked it up and put it on its back on the surface. Otshirvani sat on the frog's stomach and told his assistant to dive and see what he could find beneath the waters. After repeated attempts, Chagan-Shukuty brought up some earth. At Otshirvani's behest he sprinkled it on the frog which sank, leaving the little earth, just big enough for the divine pair to rest on, afloat on the deep. As

The frog makes one of his rare appearances in Greek mythology in the legend of Leto's wanderings after she has given birth to Apollo and Artemis. To revenge herself upon rude shepherds who prevent her from quenching her thirst in a pool of water she changed them into frogs: earthenware plate in the Victoria & Albert Museum, based on a 16th century Italian woodcut

they slept, Shulmus the devil came and saw his opportunity to destroy the gods and the still tiny earth by flinging them into the waters. But when he picked up 'the earth' it grew so that he could not see around him; he ran, but the more he ran the bigger grew the earth. Finally, he gave up and dropped the now enormous earth just as Otshirvani awoke. Shulmus escaped to continue his evil work in new ways. In other Asian myths the frog supports the world (as he does in Ceylon, beneath a turtle, a snake and a giant).

The frog is also connected with the deluge myths found in many parts of the world. In Queensland, Australia, the aborigines say that a great frog once swallowed all the water in the world, causing great drought and suffering. It occurred to the people that if only they could make the frog laugh, he would bring up the water and all would be well again. Several animals did comic turns and dances for him; but he remained unamused until the eel, by squirming and wriggling about, made him roar with laughter. As he laughed the waters burst out, flooding the world and drowning most of mankind.

The Huron Indians of North America have a similar story saying that all water was in the belly of a huge frog until Ioskeha, the great hero of creation, stabbed him and returned the waters to the lakes and rivers. In other North American legends animals brought order to the world, which was then destroyed by monsters bearing fire and flood; according to the Alaskan tribes, one of these demons was a monstrous frog-woman.

Naturally enough, for many peoples the frog is associated with rain. This is especially so, it seems, in India and South America. Orinoco tribes in Venezuela have kept frogs captive and beat them in time of drought. A hymn in the Hindu *Rig Veda* seems to show that frogs were worshipped for bringing rain or that, awakened themselves by showers, they brought long life and prosperity; the gods granted rain when the frogs croaked but the moon killed them with the dew. It was also thought that the much-needed moisture could be summoned from the skies by pouring water over a frog or by hanging it up. In Malaya the same result could be achieved by swinging it on the end of a cord. Some Chinese tales say the dew brings frog spawn down from the moon; the frog is called the 'celestial chicken'. By contrast, the Shan and the Karen tribes of Burma regard the frog as the enemy of the moon, the demon that swallows it at eclipses.

In Europe, the frog figured chiefly as an ingredient of magic and was highly regarded in the 'medical' half-world between magic and science. Although toads were preferred to frogs in the practices of witchcraft, the latter were certainly credited with magical qualities; in some countries frogs were always killed on sight because they were thought to be witches. In America and other countries, though, it was deadly bad luck to kill a frog; at the least it would make your cow's milk bloody. Here the fro
is a creature of positive magic; it is luck
if one enters your house, or if you drea
of frogs. You make a wish on the first fro
heard in spring; and gamblers will b
winners if they meet a frog in the road o
their way to gamble. American superstitio
still retains the belief that a hook-shape
bone of the frog will act as a love charm, i
placed among the clothing of the perso
whose love is being sought.

Beliefs in the frog's medicinal power
go back a long time. Pliny the Elder, wh
died in 113 AD, discusses the 'magic' (whic
he himself professed to regard as silly o
wicked) introduced from the East into th
Graeco-Roman world. In this magic the fro
had a variety of uses. It would be carrie
around a cornfield and buried in the centr
before sowing, and dug up before harvest
It would be hung up in orchards and vineyards to protect them from fog and storms
or in a granary to preserve the grain.
person found to be suffering from acut
inflammation of the left or right eye could b
cured by hanging the corresponding eye of
frog round his neck. The physician Gale
considered that to hold a frog, boiled i
water and vinegar, in the mouth for som
time is quite good for toothache. A late
Latin physician, Marcellus, who lived i
about 400 AD believed toothache could b
cured by spitting in a frog's mouth an
asking it to take the pain away; an Arabi
text of the 9th century recalls an ancien
belief that a woman who performed the sam
action would not conceive for a year. O
the other hand, the primitive Wends, Sla
tribes, maintained that it was the frog an
not the stork that brought new-born childre

The frog was used in medicine until th
17th century. Sufferers from epilepsy we
said to have been cured by a powder ma
of frog's liver; and the eye of a frog, plucke
before sunrise and swallowed, or worn as a
amulet, was a remedy for fever. It sti
functions in folk medicine. In America
belief a soup made from nine frogs will cu
whooping cough. In other cures the disea
has to be 'transferred' to the body of a fr
by some magical and usually inhuma
process. For instance, to cure headach
you must bind a live frog to your head a
keep it there until it dies.
(See also TOAD.)

CHARLES DE HOGHTO

The frog is generally respected in Japan, where he is one of the animals of the zodiac: 19th century statuette in the Victoria & Albert Museum

C. M. Dixon

The transformation of the Furies from vengeful fiends to benevolent guardians of the established order reflects the typically Greek belief in the triumph of reason

FURIES

IN THEIR ORIGINAL and best remembered form the Furies are among the most fearsome products of the Greek imagination. They are the avengers, three loathsome and implacable female beings, fulfillers of curses and especially of curses called down upon those who murder their elder kith and kin. Born of blood, roused from hell by the shedding of blood, they are satisfied only by the blood of their quarry.

In the dreadful beginnings of the gods, Uranus, lord of the sky, fathered the Titans upon Gaia, the earth. Uranus was afraid of his children and hid them away in the body of their mother. At length she could bear it no longer and persuaded Cronus, her youngest son, to attack her husband (see CRONUS). Cronus took a sickle and castrated his father, and when the blood from Uranus's genitals fell upon the earth, his wife, she conceived and bore the Furies. It seems strange that they, whose chief task was to hunt down the betrayers of blood kinship, should themselves have been born of their father's blood, shed by their brother. But they came into being out of a
act of revenge that was done in defen
of their mother; and it is the rights
mothers, even when they are unjust, th
they uphold with particular ferocity.

The ancient authors describe the Furi
with relish. They are horrifying in appea
ance and they stink. With snakes in the
hair, they brandish torches and meta
studded whips. They bark like bitche
virgin hell-hounds. They have suitab
ominous names: Alecto, 'the Endless
Tisiphone, 'the Retaliator'; Megaera, 't
Envious Rager'. Although their main du
was to avenge those murdered by their ki
they also sometimes took it upon themselv
to right the established order in other ways.

The Greek word for Furies was Erinyes,
nd they were also called Maniai 'raging
vomen', and, more interestingly, Eumenides,
the kindly ones'. This last name may
ave been given them by prudence and,
lmost, wish-fulfilment, rather as the Black
Sea, noted for its violent storms, was called
he Euxine or 'the Calm'. Robert Graves,
vriting of the Furies, says it was 'unwise to
nention their (real) name in conversation'.
But it is perhaps more likely that the name,
t least in historical times, is a sign of a
ypically Greek habit; the taming of some-
hing wild not by weakening it but by finding
place for it in an existing ordered system.

The classical Greeks, heirs to a fierce and
ncient myth like that of the Furies,
mphasized the positive and preserving,
ather than the negative and destructive,
spect of these savage beings. They dwelt
n their role as guardians of the social order
nore than on their being avengers of crime.
nd as guardians the Furies were kindly.
Moreover, an educated 5th century Athenian
vould be quite prepared to accept the
Erinyes, the avengers, as credible inhabitants
f a mythical, heroic past, as doubtless did
hose who lived in that past; but as a citizen
f his time he would more readily believe in
he Eumenides, the guardians of the
roprieties and values of his urban society.

ncient, Mindless Fiends

This transformation of the Furies, in nature
nd role as well as in name, is vividly
ortrayed in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus,
vhich is concerned not only with the Furies'
nost famous pursuit, but also with their
eing tamed, and established as Athenian
ivinities.

The drama opens in the precinct of the
emple of Apollo at Delphi. Orestes has come
here in the hope of throwing off the Furies
vho are, quite literally, after his blood. For he
as killed his mother Clytemnestra, and also
er lover Aegisthus, for their murder of
Agamemnon his father. Orestes did this
errible deed out of duty, his inescapable
luty to avenge his father at any cost; and he
lid it after much agonized self-questioning,
n having sought the guidance of Apollo.
he Furies, more ancient beings than
o, know nothing of this duty. Their
appointed task is to track and destroy
those who slay their elder kin, and
ticularly those who kill their mothers.
tigating circumstances or the code of the
unger gods mean nothing to them.

At the beginning of the play, the Furies
lying senseless on the ground, put to
p by Apollo. It is possible to see that they
re female but they are too loathsome to be
alled women. Their skin is black, they are
lressed in foul rags. Their breath is hot as
hey snort in their disgusting sleep and
noisome ooze drips from their eyes. Apollo
azes at them in horror, for they are hated by
oth gods and men. He is of a younger, more
racious generation of divinities, dwelling in
he bright sunlight and, god though he is, he
as far more in common with the man Orestes,
rapped in the toils of conflicting duty, than
ith these ancient, mindless fiends from the
loom of Tartarus.

Clytemnestra, however, thinks differently.

'Ghastly yet magnificent fiends', the Furies were originally avengers whose main task was to track down and destroy those who had murdered their elder kin, particularly those who had killed their mothers: 18th century statue in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Photo Meyer

Her ghost appears and rebukes the Furies for sleeping. They begin to whine and moan. As they writhe awake they spit out their first words, a ferocious string of sounds: '*Labe, labe, labe, labe, phradzou!*', 'Seize him, seize him, seize him, seize him, mark him!'. They revile Apollo who, a younger god, has broken the ancient laws by harbouring a doomed transgressor of these laws. He turns them out of the sanctuary. They are eager to go, for Orestes has fled to Athens to throw himself upon the mercy of Athene. During his flight Orestes has tried to expunge his guilt by ritual purifications but the Furies remain unplacated.

We see them in pursuit and then, having reached Athens in their 'wingless flight', performing a horrific *danse macabre*. They shriek of human blood, the scent of which fills them with delight. They intend to suck the living blood from Orestes and take him alive to hell to torture him there. They boast that their song drives their victim mad, binds his soul and withers his life. The gods may not touch or impede them in the inexorable task set them by fate. They do not care if they are dishonoured and despised. Nothing can hinder them, although they are separated from the gods by 'a light not of the sun'.

Respectable Matrons

Athene enters and is amazed at the extraordinary and revolting spectacle. But when the Furies explain themselves she says she knows their lineage and name. They, somewhat surprisingly, say they are willing to let her judge Orestes, since they reverence her and her birth. This the beginning of their transformation, though at this point they probably trust Athene more than Apollo simply because she is female, and they expect her to side with the mother rather than the son; they are soon to be disappointed by Athene's championing of the rights of the male over the female.

Despite their fearsome origins, the Furies were eventually transformed into guardians of the social order, and were often depicted as grave winged maidens, sometimes carrying torches: relief on a sarcophagus showing one of the three sisters who has come to take away the soul of a dying warrior

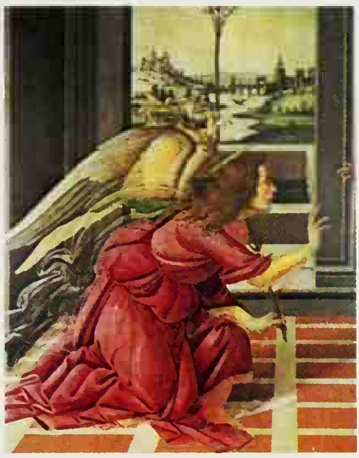
Orestes puts his case to the goddess. She is sympathetic but is afraid that if the Furies are cheated of their prey the venom of their resentment will fall on the ground and afflict the land with 'intolerable and perpetual pestilence'. Athene therefore decides to have the issue tried by her court of citizens, the Areopagus.

The Furies accept this decision but declare, in effect, that if Orestes is acquitted all the ancient virtues will be subverted by a new permissiveness. They call themselves 'the Furious Ones that keep watch upon mortals', particularly concerned to guard parents from impious children. Some fear, they say, is good and should 'abide enthroned as guardian of the heart'. Although the content of the Furies' speech, the sacredness of the ties of kinship and filial reverence, is similar to their earlier ragings, the tone is now very different. There is a stern and lofty conservatism, an almost matronly respectability, which contrasts very strongly with the savagery and odiousness of the first scenes of the play. One feels the Furies have had a bath and changed their clothes. But when Orestes is acquitted by the casting vote of Athene, their rage breaks out anew. The younger gods 'have ridden down the ancient laws', they cry in Athene's face, and, quite forgetful of their acceptance of her arbitration, they threaten to poison and pollute the land.

The final scene of the play depicts Athene's difficult struggle to placate the Furies. She offers them a temple and a home in Athens, and a role as guardians of the city and its virtues. For a long time the Furies refuse, enraged at the decision of the court. But although they are furious it is now only because they believe ancient justice has been violated; they no longer shriek for blood. They are outraged but they are no longer hounds from hell Gradually, in a dying fall, they succumb to Athene's pleadings and promises and move off in a solemn procession to dwell in a cave beneath the Acropolis, and to watch over the well-being of the city.

In the surrender of the Furies, these ghastly yet magnificent fiends, and their acceptance of a tamer role as guardians rather than avengers, we may see the triumph of reason over unreason; 'the furious ones' have become 'the kindly ones' a characteristically Greek transformation. (See also FATE.)

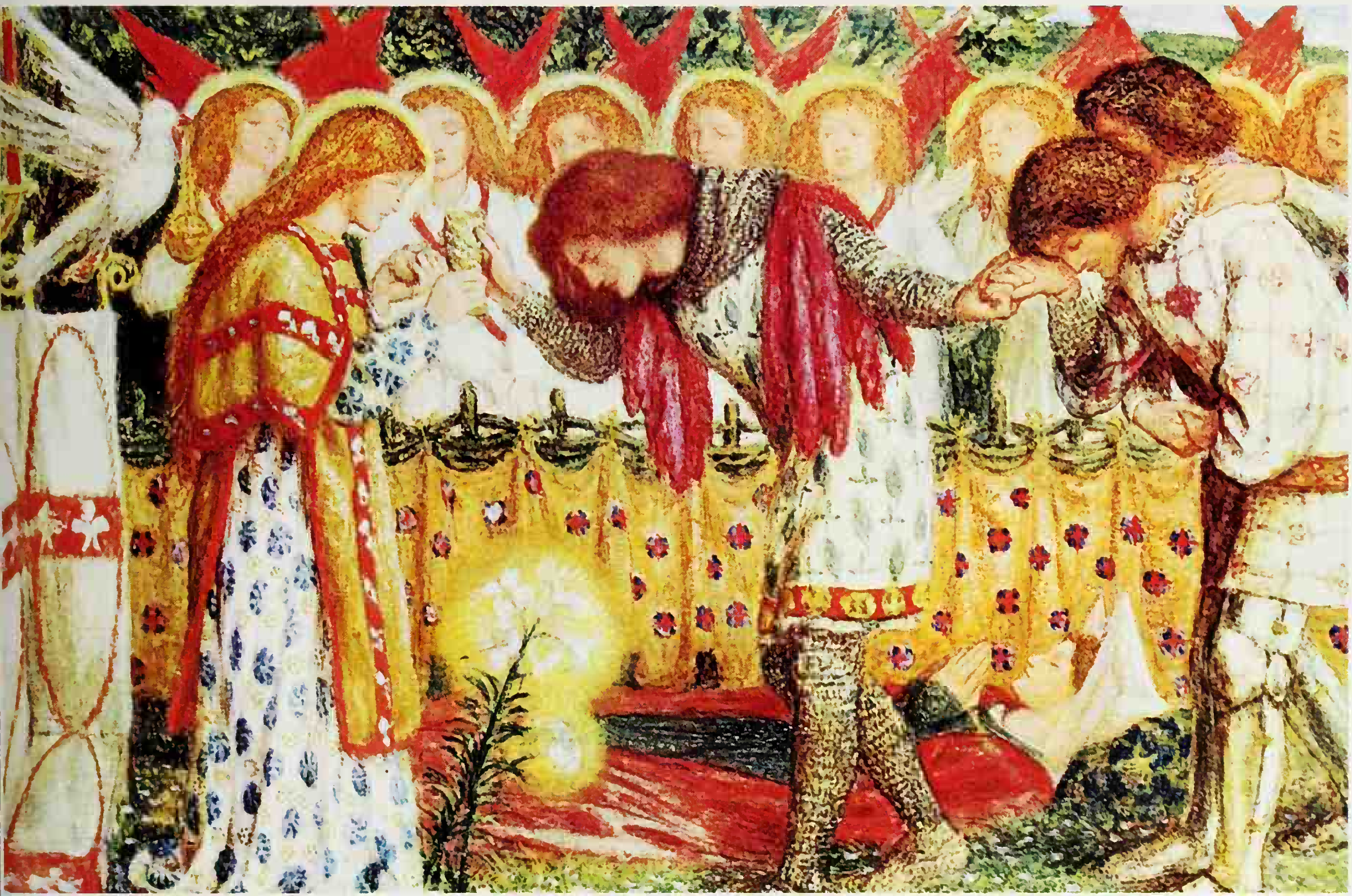
CHARLES DE HOGHTON



Scala

Gabriel

An archangel of Jewish and Christian tradition; one of God's chief messengers who was sent to explain certain visions to Daniel, to inform Zacharias of the birth of John the Baptist, and to announce to the Virgin Mary the conception of Jesus: in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Gabriel was set to watch over Paradise: Mohammedans call him the spirit of truth, and believe that he took Mohammed to heaven where the Koran was dictated to him.
See ANGELS.



John Webb

Sir Galahad, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in the Tate Gallery: it was Galahad's stainless purity that won him the Grail

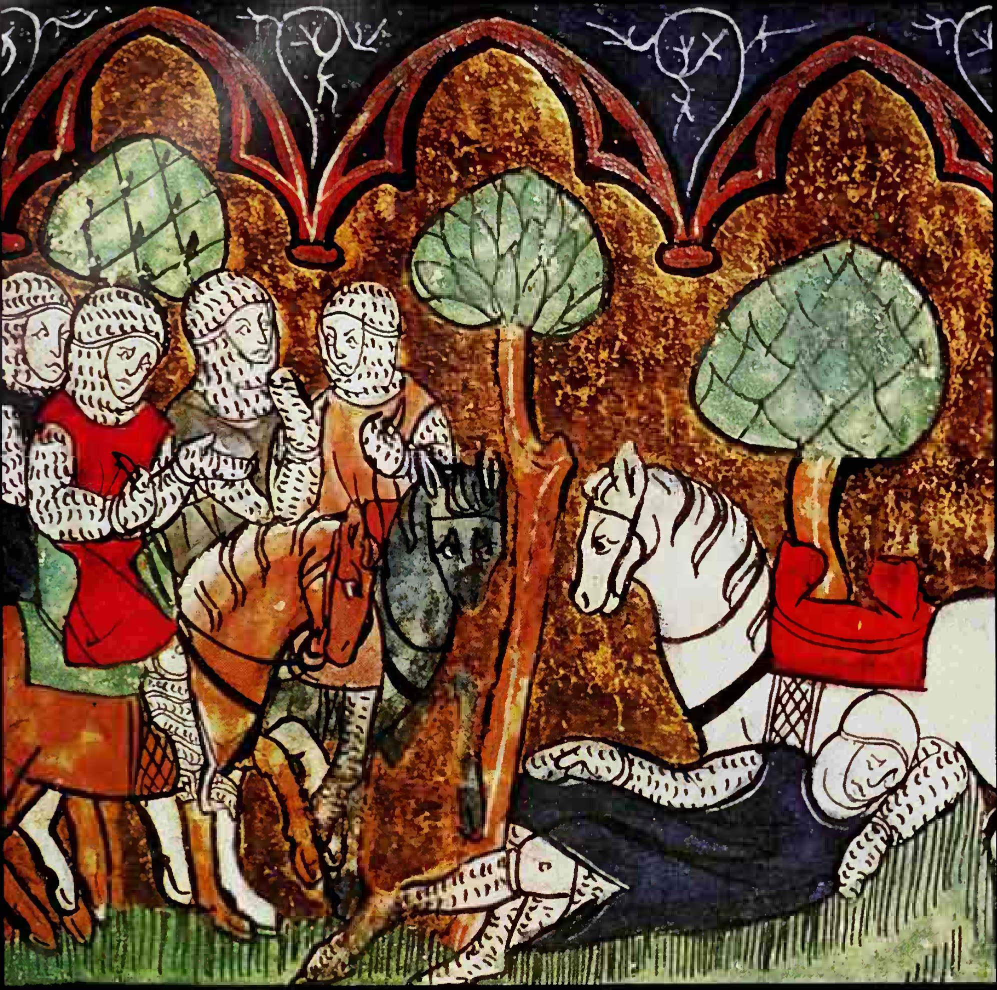
GALAHAD

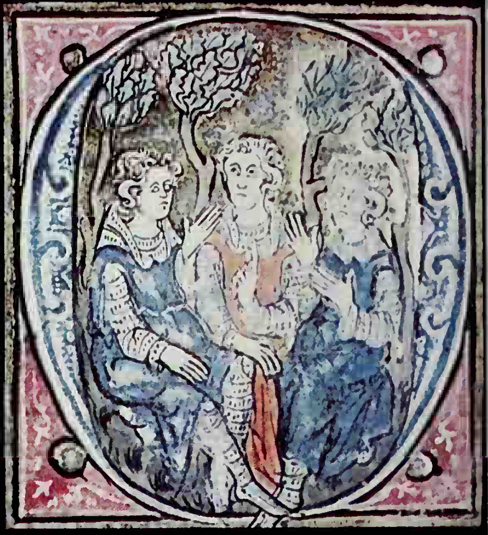
'BUT IN THE SIEGE Perilous there shall no man sit therein but one, and if there be any so hardy to do it he shall be destroyed, and he that shall sit there shall have no fellow.' These are Merlin's words in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* and the knight who had no equal and who took his appointed place in the Siege Perilous, the empty seat at the Round Table, was Galahad.

The coming of Galahad to Camelot, one year at Pentecost, marked the beginning of the quest of the Grail and the end of the fellowship of Arthur's knights. A sword had been found, embedded in a great stone and with lettering on the pommel which said that only the best knight in the world could draw it out. Lancelot refused the attempt but Gawain and Perceval tried and failed. When the knights sat down to eat at the Round Table, an old man came in, leading the young Galahad without sword or shield but with an empty scabbard. The old man led Galahad to his place at the Siege Perilous. The other knights marvelled and showed Galahad the sword in the stone. He drew it lightly out and settled it in his scabbard. Arthur himself, of course, had drawn a yet more celebrated sword from a stone in his own youth (see ARTHUR).

A greater portent was in store, for after a tournament in which Galahad proved his prowess as a fighter, when they all went to supper they heard a terrible roll of thunder, a ray of bright sunlight shone into the hall, 'and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost.' Unlike Christ's disciples who spoke in tongues at the first Pentecost, with which a parallel and a contrast are being drawn here, the knights sat as silent as if they had been struck dumb. 'Then there entered into the hall the Holy Grail covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it.'

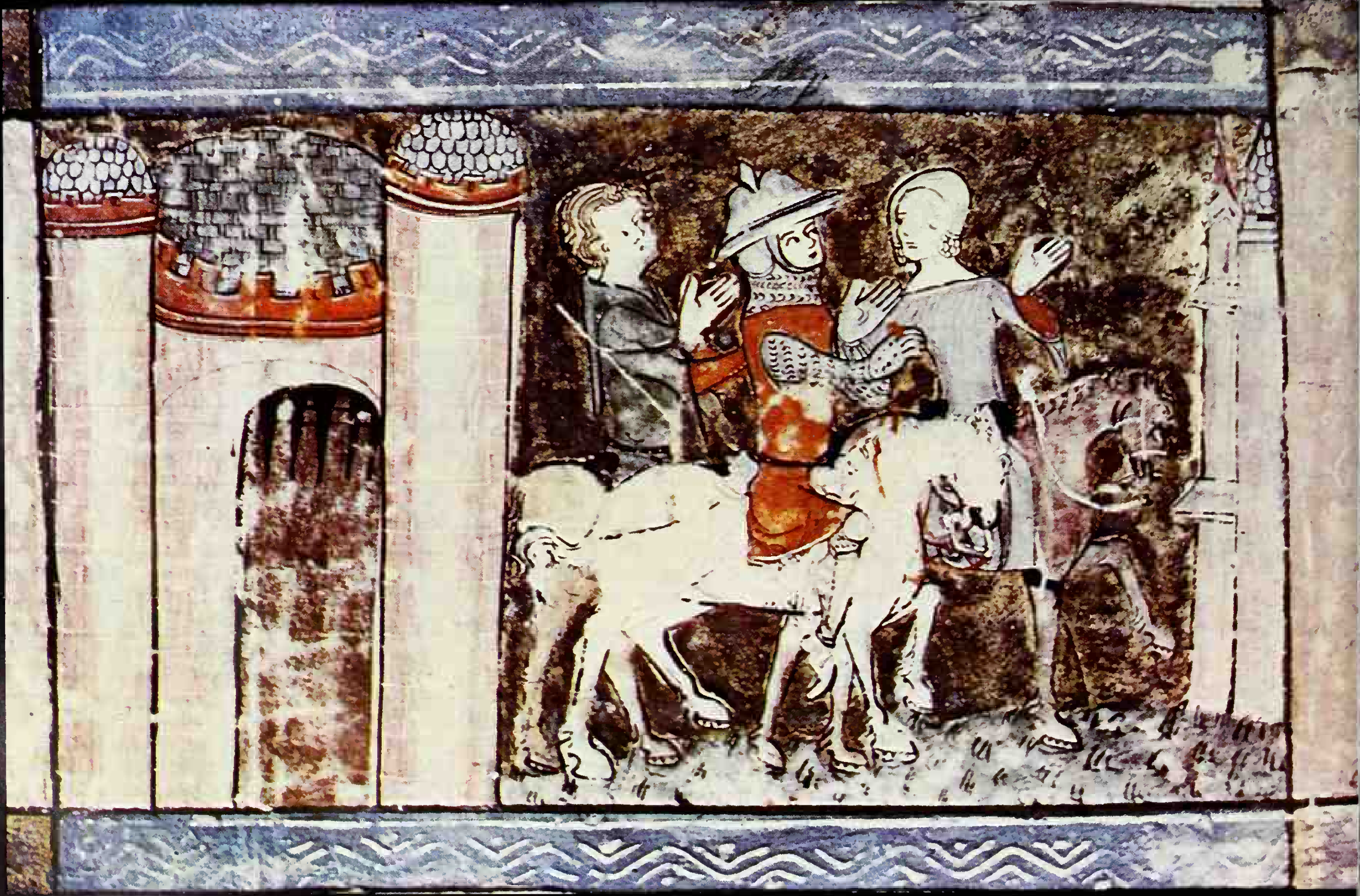
Awestruck, Gawain and most of the other knights vowed to go in search of the Grail. King Arthur sadly lamented that he had been bereft of 'the fairest fellowship and





Unlike the other Arthurian heroes, Galahad's history does not go back into the pagan past. He was a character deliberately invented to contrast the ideal of the perfect Christian knight with the brave but essentially worldly ideals of chivalry. He was fitted into the older tradition by making him the son of Lancelot by Elaine, conceived after Lancelot had been bewitched into mistaking her for his mistress, Guinevere. *Left* Galahad asleep under a tree, resting from the adventures of the quest, from an early 14th century French ms *Above* Galahad, from a 13th century ms *Below* Galahad with Lancelot and Elaine, from *Roman de Lancelot du Lac*, 14th century

British Museum



the truest of knighthood that ever were seen together in any realm of the world: for when they depart from hence I am sure they shall never meet more in this world, for they shall die many in the quest.'

The Saintly Knight

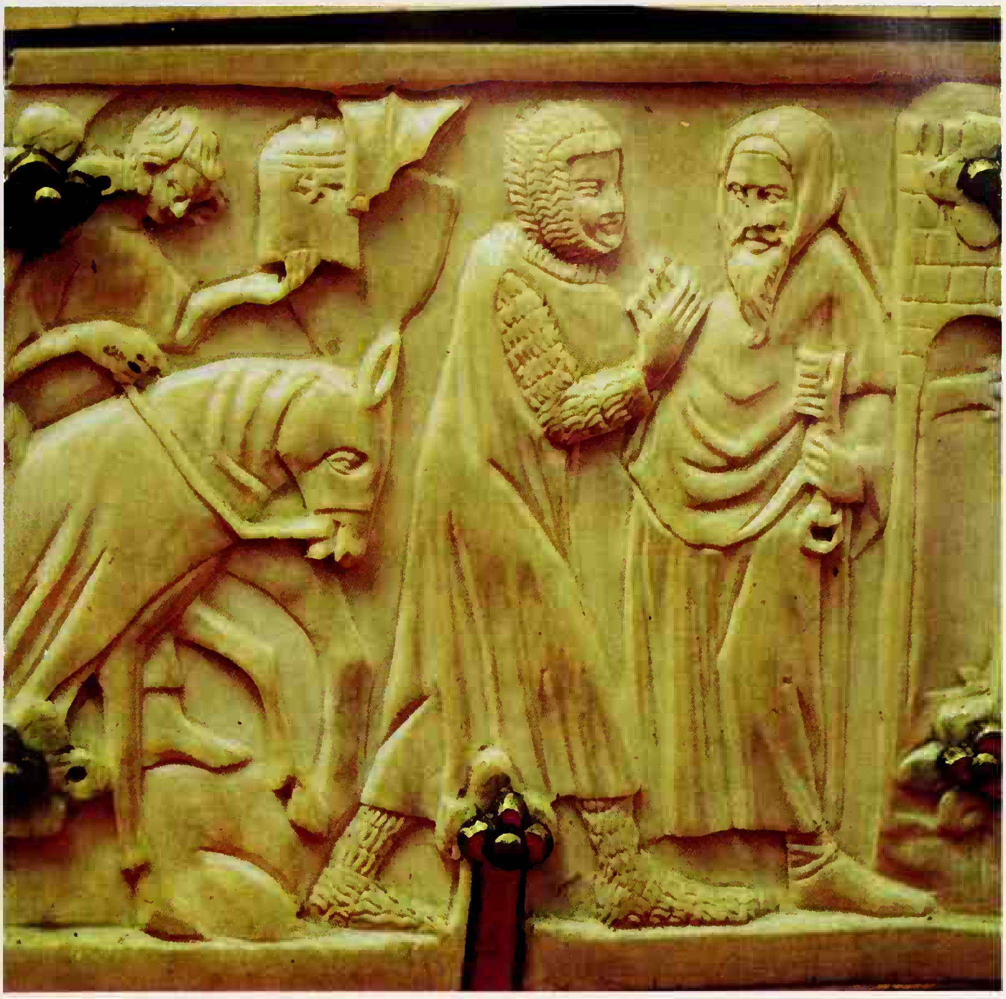
Malory drew the material for this part of his work from the French *Queste del Saint Graal*, written in the early 13th century, and Galahad 'had no fellow' in more senses than one. He was a literary interloper, not a hero of pagan legend more or less Christianized, but a character invented by the author of the *Queste* and a wholly Christian invention at that. His name comes from Mount Galaad – Gilead in English translations of the Bible – in the Song of Solomon (chapter 6), a passage which had already been interpreted as referring to Christ. Galahad is not quite Christ himself but he comes very near it. He is the holy knight who is free of mortal sin and, in this version of the legend, the only one who penetrates fully to the heart of the mystery of the Grail. Like Christ, he is descended from King David, and in the *Queste* a monk tells him that his coming must be compared to the coming of Jesus, adding hastily, 'in semblance only, not in sublimity'.

Galahad was fitted into the older Arthurian traditions by making him the son of Lancelot by the fair Elaine, daughter of the lord of the Grail castle, conceived after Lancelot had been bewitched into mistaking Elaine for his adored mistress, Guinevere. But the fruit of this intended adultery is the purest of mortal men and with his coming the ardour of the knights turns away from the duties and pleasures of chivalry in the world of the Round Table, from jousting, courtly love and adventure for its own sake, to search for a different, spiritual world in the quest of the Grail.

Galahad ends the fellowship of Arthur's knights because he devalues it, which accounts for the attacks that lovers of the older stories have launched at him as a prig, an inhuman cardboard saint. His character was strongly influenced by the ideals of the Cistercians, a monastic order of great influence at the time when the *Queste* was written. At one point in it a hermit lists the Christian virtues in order of importance: chastity ranks highest (with lust as the root of all evils), followed by humility, patience, justice and charity. These are scarcely the virtues, nor the order, which the older heroes would have adopted.

Galahad's virginity is strongly stressed. He is pure of body and pure of heart. He is also kindly and merciful – he does not kill an opponent if he can avoid it – but he seems inhuman, partly because he is totally concentrated on his task but more because he has no failings. Unlike some of the other knights, he makes no spiritual progress during the quest, because he is perfect to begin with.

The knights set off in quest of the Grail and Galahad comes to an abbey of white monks (Cistercians) where there is a shield which kills or wounds everyone who takes it. It bears a red cross on a white ground and can be carried only by the finest knight in Christendom. The symbolism of the white and red is explained later in the story when Galahad is told, 'you are as pure and virginal compared to other knights as the lily flower, the symbol of virginity, is white beyond all other. You are the lily of purity, you are the true rose, the flower of strength and healing with the tint of fire: for the fire of the Holy Ghost burns in you so brightly . . .'



Victoria & Albert Museum/A Fleming

Galahad receives the key of the Castle of Maidens, after rescuing them from slavery to seven knights, who represent the seven deadly sins: ivory casket, c 1320

The Vision of Heaven

Galahad rides many journeys and finds many adventures. With Perceval and Bors he comes to a miraculous ship (the ship of Faith) in which is the sword that struck what Malory called 'the dolorous stroke', the blow that killed King Lambar and turned his kingdom into the Waste Land. Lambar, the *Queste* explains, was the father of the Maimed King, who had himself tried to draw the sword. At that instant he was transfixed through both thighs by a flying lance, in punishment for his presumption, and the wound had never healed.

Galahad took this sword and eventually, after years of search, the three knights came to the castle of Corbenic, the home of the Maimed King and the Grail. Here they saw the Grail itself, the dish from which Christ ate the Passover lamb at the Last Supper, and also the Holy Lance, with which the crucified Christ was wounded in the side and from which drops of blood were still falling. They saw a vision of Christ appearing from the Grail, and he said to them: 'My knights, my servants and my faithful sons who have attained to the spiritual life whilst in the flesh, you who have sought me so diligently that I can hide myself from you no longer, it is right you should see some part of my secrets and my mysteries . . . Take now and eat of the precious food that you have craved so long and for which you have endured so many trials.' He gave them the Communion from the Grail and 'it seemed as though the essence of all sweetness was housed within their bodies'.

Galahad no longer desired to live, for the Grail had revealed to him 'those things that the heart of man cannot conceive nor tongue relate'. He had been 'translated from the earthly plane to the celestial, to the joy of the glorious martyrs and the beloved of Our Lord'. After further adventures Perceval became a hermit and Bors made his way back to Camelot. But Galahad, who had seen the supreme vision of heaven, could not return to the world of men. His prayer to die was granted and his soul was borne to heaven by rejoicing angels. A hand came down from the sky and took the Grail and the Lance, and carried them to heaven also, and no man has ever seen them since.

(See also GRAIL.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: P. M. Matarasso trans, *The Quest of the Holy Grail* (Penguin, 1969).

GAMES

The Myths of Play

Hockey was played by the Wichita Indians in spring, to symbolize the conquest of winter; it is one of the many games which have religious or legendary connections, the subject of the first article. The second describes the ideals which gave birth to the Olympic Games

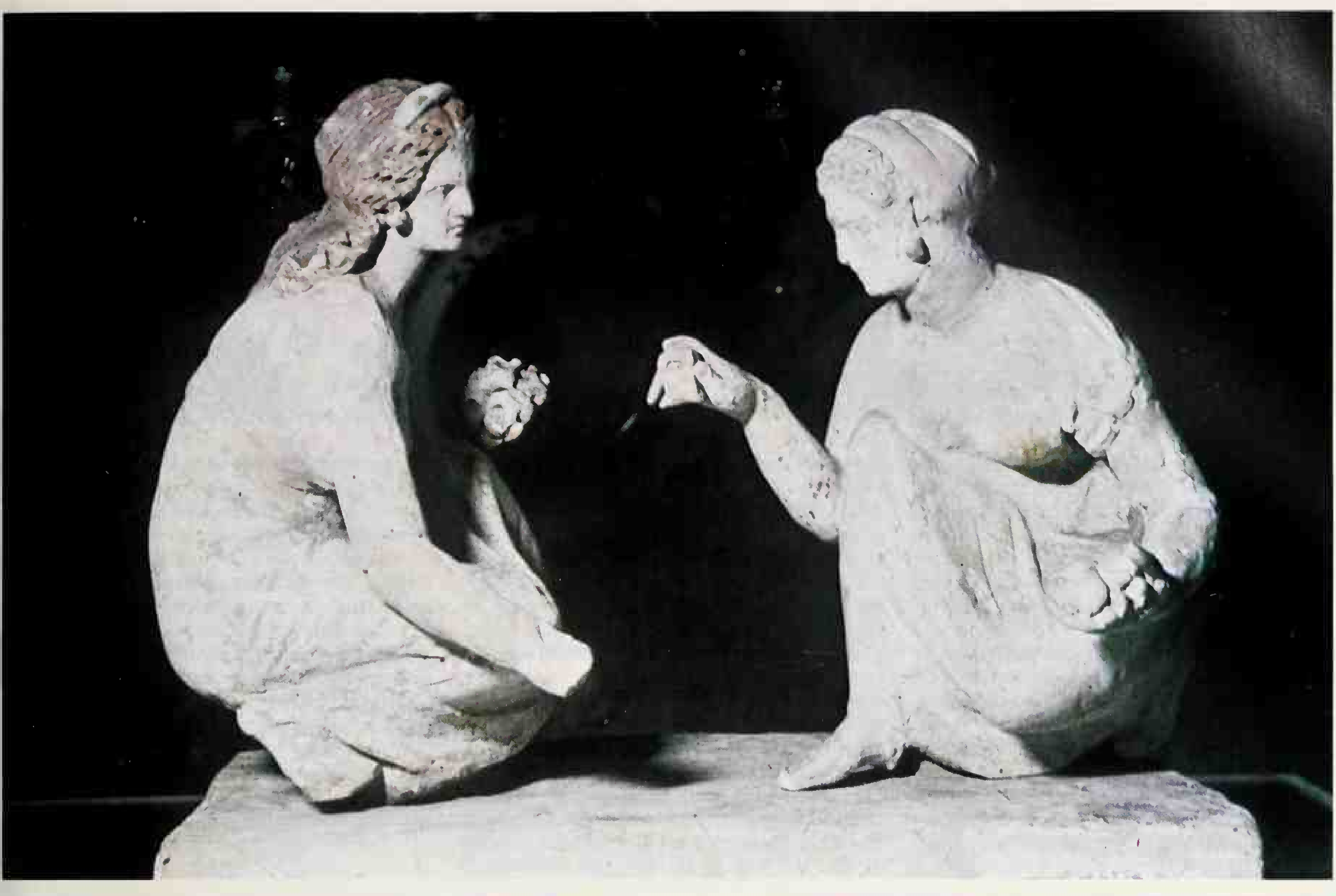
GENERALLY PLAYED for entertainment and recreation in the modern West, games have been recorded throughout history, and often reflected the social customs, and sometimes the religious beliefs, of the players. Some of the older games claim a legendary or mythical origin, and, because chance plays a large part in their attraction, divination, fortune telling and magical beliefs are in many cases associated with them.

Distinctions may be drawn between a sport such as archery, once of national importance and the more familiar ball games such as football and hockey. There are also games of chance played mainly with cards and dice, and board games such as chess.

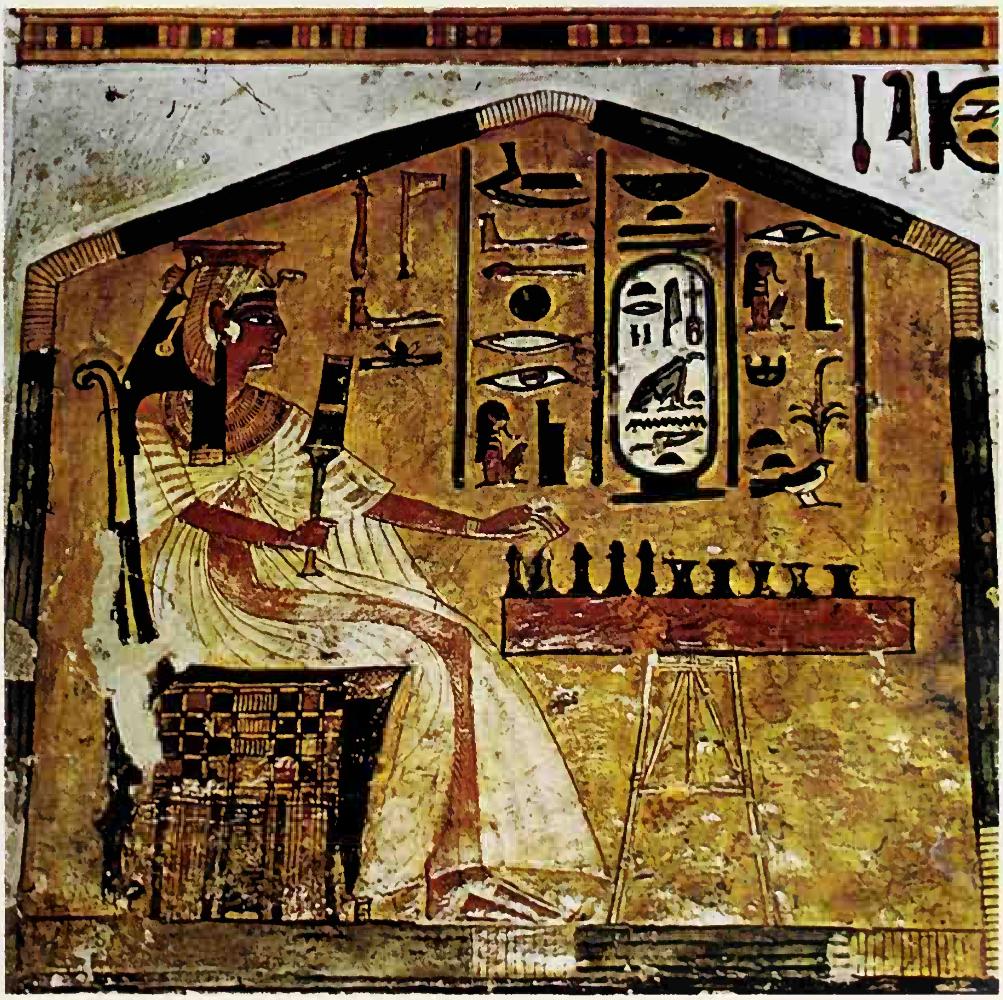
Archery originated in the Stone Age, when small, delicately chipped arrow heads were used for hunting and in war; in Saxon England they were called 'elf darts' and were treasured as charms.

In ancient times arrows were widely regarded as mediums for divination and fortune telling. In Palestine, Chaldea and Arabia the usual method was to shake the quiver in front of an image of the god being addressed, and note which arrows, previously marked, fell out. When Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, was unable to decide whether he should attack Jerusalem or Ammon, he used several methods of divination, one of which was the shaking of arrows (Ezekiel, chapter 21). Also in the Old Testament is the story of how the dying prophet Elisha laid his hands on those of Joash, King of Israel, as the latter shot 'the Lord's arrow of victory over Syria'. He then commanded the King to strike the arrows on the ground, and prophesied that Joash would overcome Syria in battle as many times as he had struck the ground (2 Kings, chapter 13).

In fairy tales the hero often shoots an arrow into the air and follows its path to fortune. Arrow heads are found buried under the foundations of buildings or built into



Games are often mysterious matters, closely linked with social and religious customs *Facing page* Chess is one of the most ancient of board games, its origin obscured by a mass of legend and mythology. A 'war game', it is rich in symbolism: scene from *The Seventh Seal*, in which the returning Crusader plays chess for his life against Death *Right* A game similar to chess was played in Ancient Egypt: scene on an Egyptian tomb, c 1300 BC *Above* In classical Greece dice were made from bones, and were originally instruments of divination; eventually this method of determining the wishes of the gods developed into a gambling game in which the winner was the player who received the best 'omen' when the dice were cast: Greek statuette in terra cotta, 300 BC



the walls of houses or churches to protect them from evil influences, and they were at one time placed in stables to protect the animals from disease.

Wherever there is anything which may be used as a ball, there is a potential game; ball games have been played through the ages. The balls used may have been 'natural', such as pebbles, a block of wood or a lump of clay, or they may have been fashioned from wood, bone or ivory, made from plaited straw, or from strips of skin or fibres. A skin or woven cover may have been stuffed with hair, wool or other material, or inflated with air. Unfortunately all except those made of stone or bone were perishable, and there is little archeological evidence of their existence, although the remains of balls

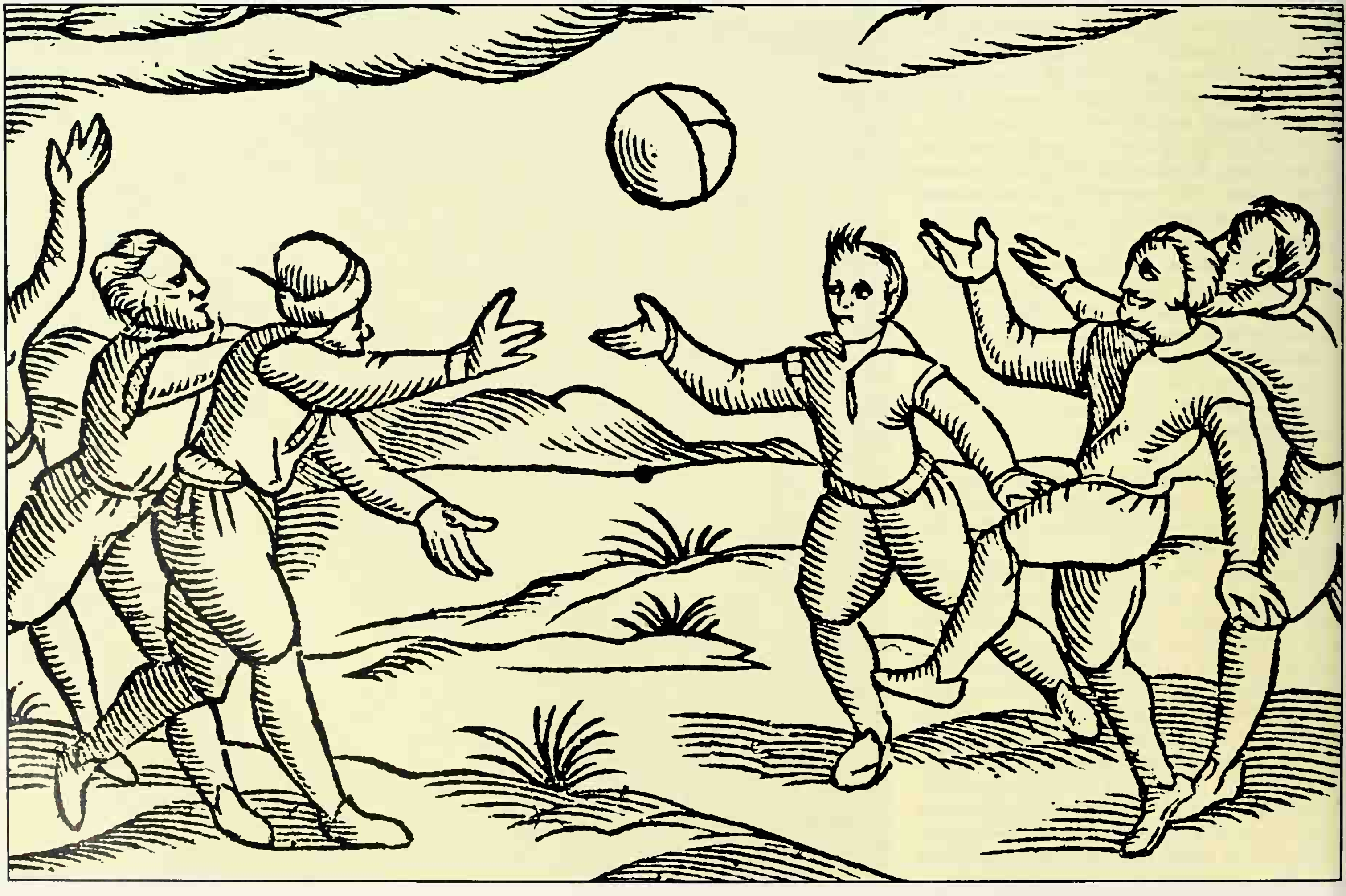
made from skin filled with grass or hay have been found in early Egyptian tombs.

Rubber balls were used in South America long before rubber was first brought to Europe; in North America red and yellow balls symbolized the sun, and ball games celebrated the conquest of day over night, and light over darkness.

Football is one of the most popular and possibly one of the most sophisticated games in the world today; but in its primitive form, needing nothing more than an object to kick and someone to kick it back, it has been an obvious form of game since unrecorded times. It is not mentioned by name until the 14th century, and then chiefly in prohibitions as, for instance, when Edward III ordered his sheriffs to suppress the game as it interfered with training in archery.

Medieval football was independent of grounds and rules. The ball was placed in a neutral place, often the churchyard, and the villagers, perhaps a hundred to a side, hurled themselves on it, and attempted to carry it off. Traditionally the game was played on Shrove Tuesday when it symbolized the conquest of spring over winter. As a contest between married and unmarried men, the game appears to have been a relic of a fertility rite. Shrovetide football was also played vigorously by women as well as men until well into the 19th century, and the custom has continued into modern times. In Chester, football was said to commemorate kicking the head of a captured

Modern football is one of the most popular and possibly one of the most sophisticated of modern games; on the other hand, in its most primitive form, requiring only an object to kick and someone to return it, it has been played through the centuries. In various parts of the world the game has at times acquired a symbolic meaning, sometimes as a fertility rite, sometimes as a celebration of the conquest of spring over winter *Above* American football: although the rules are sophisticated, this version still retains much of the rough and tumble of the game which was played in medieval times *(below)* where 'there one's maim'd, who never saw the ball': this 17th century illustration from Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britanna* is probably the earliest one showing organized football



Mansell Collection

Dane; in Derby it was thought to celebrate a local victory over the Romans. At St Ives in Cornwall the Mayor used to throw a ball coated with silver, perhaps a relic of sun-worship, from the pier and crowds fought for it, without limit and without rules.

Hockey, which occurs as 'hurling' in Ireland, and 'shinty' in Scotland, possibly originated in Persia; a similar game was played by the Greeks and Romans. In Morocco it appears to have some connection with fertility rites, as it is played in the spring to induce rain and at other times if there is a drought.

The Wichita of Oklahoma believed that the game was handed down to them by a mythical ancestor, and it was played during their spring festival. The team with the green hockey sticks and balls overcame the opposing side, symbolizing the conquest of winter. In the south-western desert region the Hopi Indians believed they could foretell the maize yield by playing hockey with a buckskin ball filled with seeds. If the seeds spilt out the harvest would be good; if the ball failed to burst, crops would fail.

Princely Pastimes

Chess, one of the oldest and most honoured of board games, originated in Asia and is commonly assumed to have been brought to Europe through the Arabs. 'Checkmate', from *shah mat*, 'the king is dead', is derived from Arabic, but it is not known whether the Arabs encountered the game in Persia or in India. Among early names for chess, and for the pieces, some are Indian.

An Indian legend, one of many concerning the origin of the game, relates how chess was invented by the wife of the giant Ravana, King of Ceylon, to entertain him when Rama, the mythical hero of the *Rama Yana* (which dates from about 500 BC), was besieging him in his palace. But gaming boards and primitive chessmen have been discovered by archeologists in Palestine on sites which date from 1500 BC or even earlier. Boards, with small blue pottery cones and pyramids, were revealed when a large house near Jerusalem was uncovered and inlaid gaming boards have been discovered in Crete.

The Crusaders are generally credited with bringing chess to England from the East after the Crusades of the early Middle Ages but there is evidence that the game was known long before then. In Irish folk-tales King Arthur plays chess with the Irish knight Owain, and the chieftain-god Midir the Proud wins the fairest maid in the world by checkmating Eochaid, the King of Ireland.

Playing cards are believed to have originated in China, although a Hindu legend claims them for India. In Europe they absorbed some elements from Tarot (see TAROT). The modern pack of 52 cards came to England from France in the 15th century. They have been used for innocent amusement and reckless gambling, for divination and fortune telling, ever since.

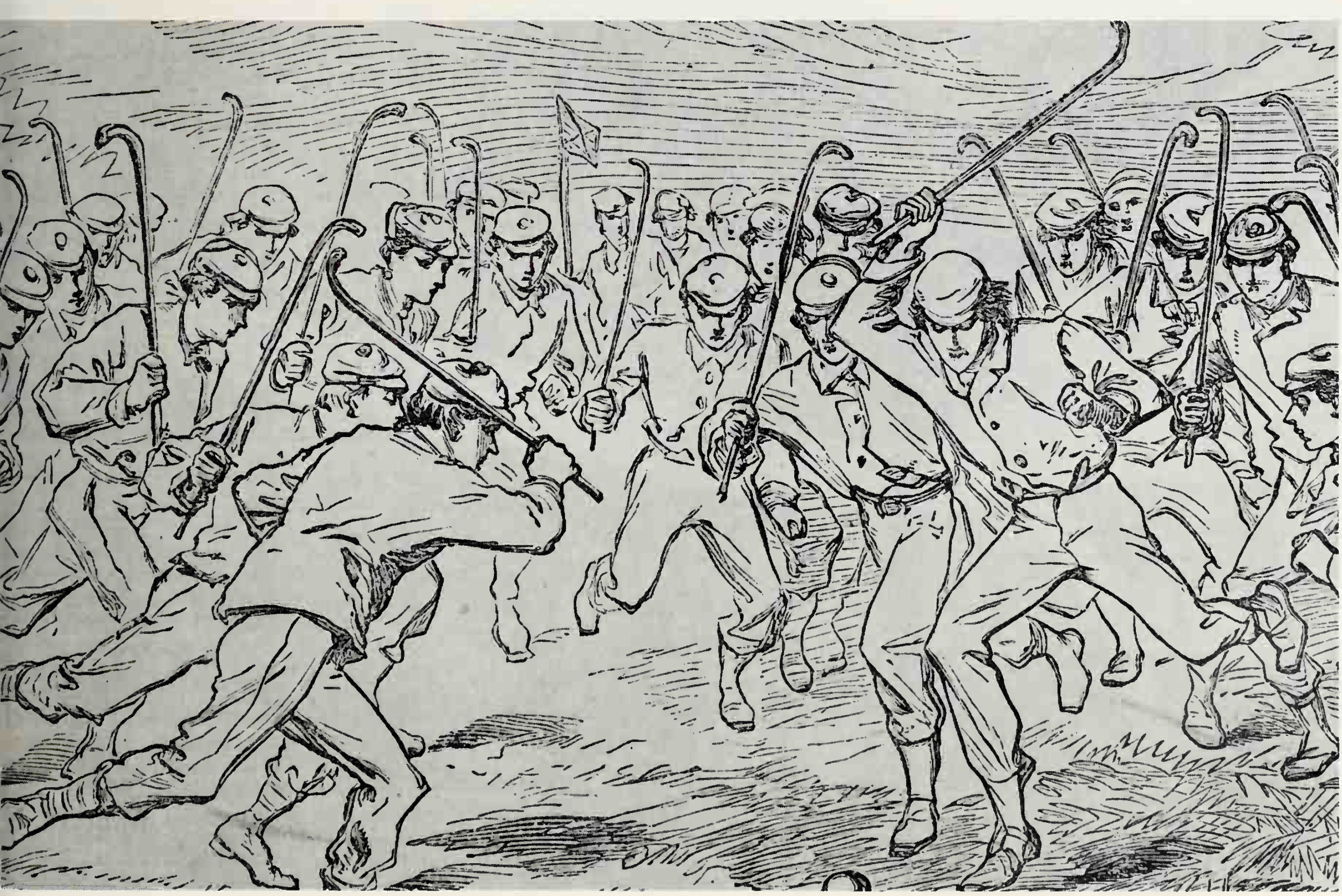
There are many superstitions connected with cards, which the Presbyterians nicknamed the Devil's Picture Book or the Devil's Bible. A player will get up and walk round the table, or he will turn his chair round, to change his luck. A number of cards have their own superstitions, such as the Ace of Spades, which is connected with death, and the Nine of Diamonds, known as the 'curse of Scotland'. Sailors and thieves regard all cards as unlucky; cards are thrown overboard in a storm and no thief will include a pack in his loot. (See CARDS.)

Gambling with dice was common in ancient times in Egypt, the Far East, Greece and Rome; and there is possibly even earlier evidence of the use of a form of dice for gambling, or for divination, in the pebbles dotted with red ochre, which were found among artefacts dated to about 7000-5000 BC, in the painted cave of Mas d'Azil in France.

The dice used in classical times were derived from the little cuboid bones known as *astragali* which are found in the joints of many animals, especially sheep, and in human ankles. They have been discovered on the site of Ephesus in Asia Minor, and in Sparta. Bone or wooden dice, their six sides marked with dots or numbers, were commonly used for telling fortunes.

ALISON H. QUIGGIN

Played since classical times, hockey has a ritual significance in some parts of the world; in Morocco, for instance, it is played to induce rain *Below* Until comparatively recently hockey was a rough game, not suited to 'weakly or timid players': illustration from *The Popular Educator* by F. Wentworth



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The Olympic Games

The first Olympic Games of which there are historical – as distinct from mythical – records, were held in 776 BC, to mark a truce between the states of Elis and Pisa in western Greece. For the next thousand years, they were one of the greatest unifying influences in the Greek world, providing satisfaction in athletic accomplishment for both competitors and spectators, and also pleasing the gods who were thought to look down with favour on the highest achievements of mortals.

The Games had their origin in the myths surrounding the feats of god-like creatures, once mere men, who existed in the heroic age of Greece. Hercules is said to have cleansed the Augean Stables, the sixth of his twelve labours, by diverting a river at Olympia, the site where all later Olympic Games were held.

The ancient Games developed partly as a result of man's desire to predict the unpredictable. There was a primitive anxiety that the earth might never come to life again after winter. With the soil bare and food scarce, who could give an assurance that another year would bring a fresh harvest? The saviour of the harvest was the person with the magic of victory in him, the athlete born of Zeus the sky god. A simple race was the way to choose this man.

Later the man who embodied all the qualities of goodness or excellence was sought. Bronze statues, probably modelled from the victors, overlooked the stadium and were called *zanes*, a word that is derived from Zeus. In this way the heroes of the ancient Games were almost deified.

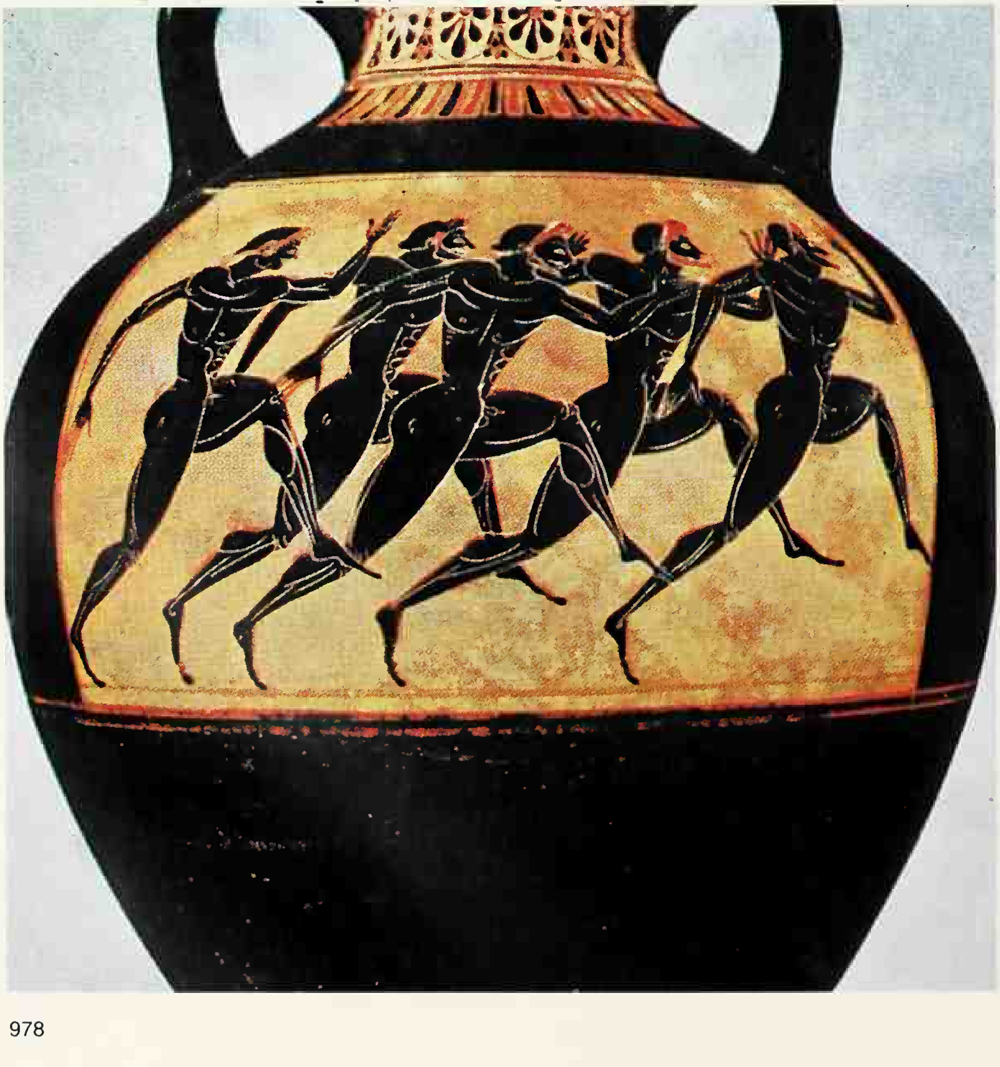
The Games developed until, in the 5th century BC, the poet Pindar described them as 'the Flower of Festivals, excellent as water, bright as gold, brilliant as the noonday sun'. This was a superlative extension of athletics to the world of art, poetry and sculpture, but the importance of the Games still lay in the search for one man, a hero who embodied all this excellence.

It is not known for certain why the Games were held every four years if they were associated with an annual event; but it is probable that the Greeks felt that a complete cycle, consisting of a sun cycle and a moon cycle, was required. Using their relatively primitive mathematics, they calculated this to be four years.

The Rule of Nakedness

In the early Olympic Games the prize for the Olympic victor was a crown of wild olives, possibly showing that the victor represented vegetation – that is, he was the new life of the year. Alternatively the olive crown could have represented simply the great distinction of the victor, and have been of no value in itself.

The Olympic Games developed partly because men feared that the earth might never come to life again after winter: the saviour of the harvest was thought to be the man who had the magic of victory in him, and he was chosen through a simple race. Later, the man who was the embodiment of goodness and excellence was sought: scene on a Greek vase, c 525 BC



Metropolitan Museum, New York

The honours were shared fairly equally among the various city-states. Athletes came from all parts of Greece and at the time of the Games there was a general truce to hostilities. The contests were open to all men of true Greek descent. The only woman admitted to the Games was the priestess of Demeter, the goddess of agriculture. In fact, this rule acted as a spur to contestants' mothers and sisters, and there are various stories of women obtaining entry disguised as men. In an attempt to restrict entries to men, it is said that the rule of nakedness was then extended to trainers as well as contestants.

Apart from the chariot races, the main contests were four running events, boxing, two types of wrestling, and a pentathlon consisting of javelin, discus, long jump, running and wrestling, in each of which the competitors took part. This basic pattern of events remained almost unchanged for a thousand years. The runners completed distances which were multiples of the *stade*, about 180 yards. The name of any man who achieved a particular combination of victories for the first time was recorded. Our word 'agony' is derived from *agon*, which is Greek for an athletic contest.

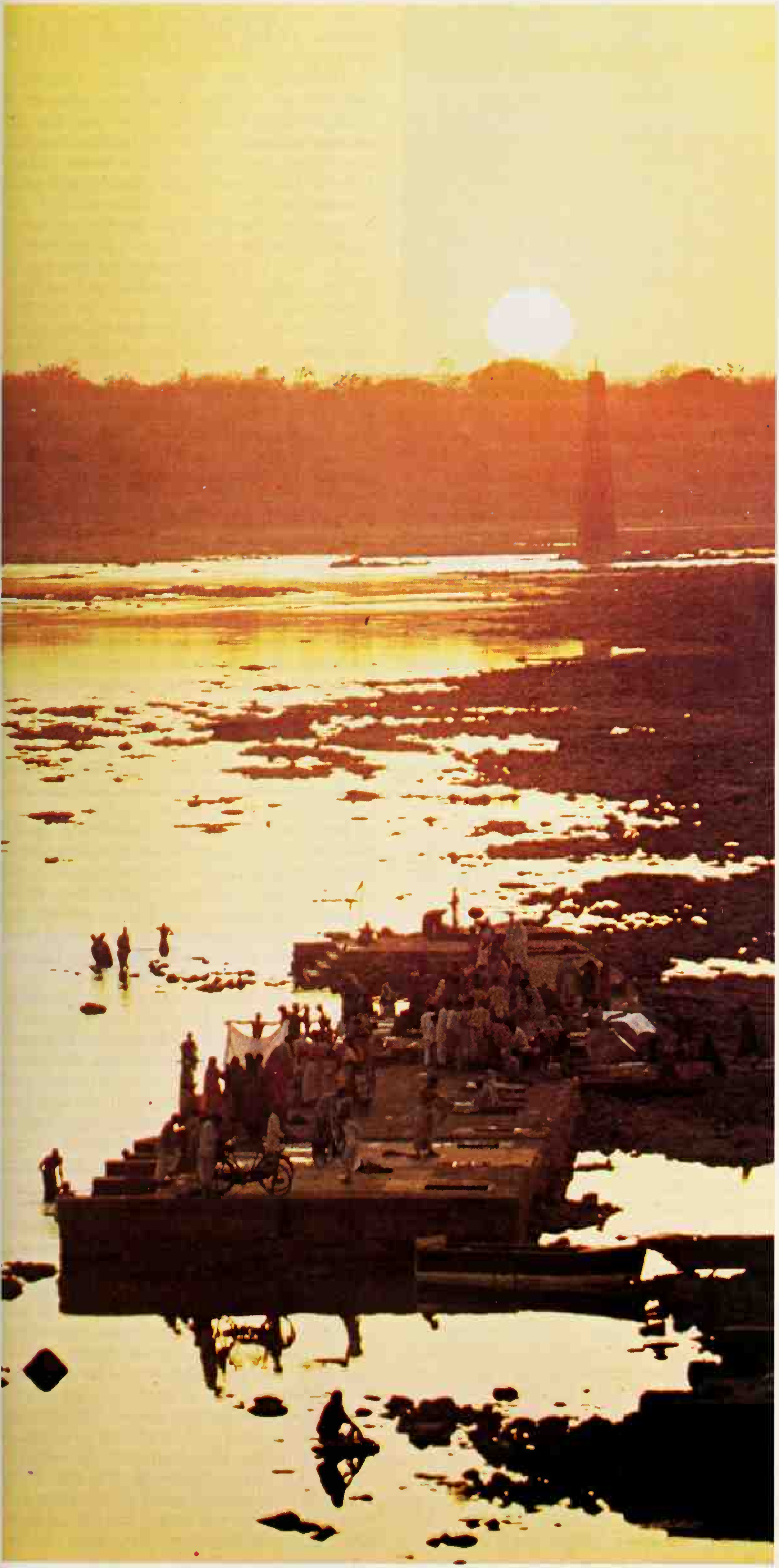
When Rome inherited the power of Greece, the Games became more international, professionalism crept into sport, and the Games eventually became a great tourist attraction. Physical training was carried out in gymnasia, which were also known as centres of learning. Intellect and physical fitness were not thought to be mutually exclusive, as has so often been the case in other civilizations.

Sport has never since been held in such esteem, yet at the same time the Greeks had a sense of proportion. For instance, the delicate and skilful art of wrestling was preferred to the more brutal boxing, and was the sport of the common man.

The early Christian Church rejected all athletics, believing that they were a pagan indulgence. By the 4th century AD, the Games had become vulgar and discredited, and they were finally abolished by the Christian Emperor Theodosius I in 393 AD. The Olympic Games owe their revival in the 19th century largely to the enthusiasm of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the French educationalist. The first of the modern series of Games was held in Athens in 1896, and since then they have been held every four years, apart from the intervals caused by the two world wars.

Competitors must take an oath declaring that they are true amateurs, and the winners are awarded silver-gilt medals. In victory ceremonies the flag of the victor's country is raised, and his national anthem is played. The lighting of the Olympic flame, a modern innovation, accompanies the release of pigeons from the stadium, to signify a period of truce for the Games just as, more than 2000 years ago, the city-states of Greece agreed to keep the peace during the ancient Olympic Games.

ROGER BANNISTER



B. Mondhe

India's most sacred river is divinely personified as the goddess Ganga, whose most important role is that of purifier from sin; every year many thousands of Hindus travel to the Ganges seeking to benefit from the cleansing powers of its waters

GANGES

THE INDIAN RIVER most renowned for its incomparable sanctity is the Ganges, known in Sanskrit and several other Indian languages as Ganga. Its source lies in the Himalayan region of Tehri, 13,800 feet above sea-level. Draining the western Himalayas and the northern slopes of the Vindhya range, the Ganges flows eastwards and near the town of Allahabad it is joined by the Jumna. The two rivers enclose a fertile expanse of land known as Doab or Antarvedi, which is thought to be the holy land of the early Hindu settlers. In Bengal the Ganges is joined by its greatest tributary, the Brahmaputra. The total length of the Ganges is 1557 miles.

The belief in the sacredness of the Ganges does not stem from the earliest period of Hindu history, for according to the oldest Aryan traditions embedded in the Vedic hymns, the rivers Jumna and Sarasvati were considered even holier, and in the *Rig Veda* the Ganges was mentioned only twice. But as the Aryans spread from the Punjab eastwards along the broad and fertile Ganges valley, respect for the river deepened and the sanctity of the Ganges was firmly established by the second half of the first millennium BC.

Like other natural phenomena, the Ganges was personified as a divinity, the goddess Ganga, who is still the object of a widespread cult. Some myths represent the Viyadganga, or 'heavenly Ganges' as flowing from the toe of the god Vishnu. According to a legend contained in the epic *Rama Yana*, the Ganges was brought down from heaven by the prayers of the saint Bhagiratha, in order to purify the ashes of King Sasava's 60,000 sons, who had been burnt by the angry glance of the sage Kapila. The goddess Ganga was angry at being brought down from heaven, and the god Shiva, to save the earth from the impact of her fall, caught the river on his brow, and compelled its waters to flow through the labyrinth of his matted locks.

Hindu mythology regards the goddess Ganga as the wife of the King Santanu, to whom she bore a son, Bhishma, one of the heroes of the *Mahabharata*. Sometimes she is also identified with Parvati, a mountain goddess and wife of Shiva, or other forms of the mother goddess. Many temples on the banks of the Ganges are dedicated to the goddess Ganga. Most important among them is the Ganga shrine at Hardwar, near the source of the river, while in Benares, the holy

According to Hindu mythology, the goddess Ganga, divine personification of the Ganges, was angry when she was brought down from heaven; to save the earth from the impact of her fall, the god Shiva caught the river on his brow, and its waters were compelled to flow through his matted locks

city on the bank of the Ganges, the goddess is worshipped as Annapurna, the goddess of food. Images of Ganga are found also in other parts of the country such as the cave temples of western India; and representations of Ganga and the river goddess Jumna flank the entrances of many temples built during the 4th and 5th centuries AD, the classic Gupta period. Whereas in northern and western India, Ganga is usually depicted as a woman, south Indian sculptures often represent her as a water-sprite, who is half woman, half fish.

'Hail Mother Ganges!'

In popular Hindu religion Ganga appears invariably as a benevolent figure, bestowing good health, offspring and prosperity on her worshippers. But her most important function is that of a purifier from sin, and in this respect, her waters are believed to be specially efficacious at points where the Ganges joins tributaries such as the Jumna. Though the water of the Ganges and other sacred rivers has the power to purify, it should itself be protected from impure contacts: the pollution of the Ganges, in particular, is a serious outrage. According to orthodox tradition a Hindu should not cross a river unless it is necessary and he should not bathe in it naked. He should not spit directly into the water but spit first on his palm, which he should then wash. A Hindu woman in her menses must not bathe or wash clothes in a river, and a pregnant woman should neither wash in a river nor cross it. This also applies for 40 days after the child's birth.

The purifying power of water in general, and of Ganges water in particular, is partly due to its cooling power. Many Hindu practices are based on the idea that power is heat and that cooling this heat with water renders the power innocuous. Water is also believed to destroy the evil power of spirits, and to avert the Evil Eye. Ganges water possesses all these qualities to the highest degree. The reverence of Hindus for the Ganges is non-sectarian: all castes seek to benefit from its power of purification and its blessing by bathing in the sacred water. High merit is gained by pilgrimages to the Ganges, and pilgrims catching their first glimpse of the river shout 'Hail Mother Ganges'. Every year many thousands of Hindus travel to Benares and other sacred places on the banks of the Ganges and bathe in its waters. Many shave their hair and offer it to the goddess Ganga, reinforcing the physical link between themselves and the sacred river in this way.

A special festival in honour of the birthday of the goddess Ganga is held in April or May, when her devotees bathe and give alms, and little girls float dolls on the water. The supervision of these bathing fairs lies in the hands of a special class of Brahmins, known as Gangaputra, 'sons of the Ganges'. The greatest of these fairs is held every 12 years when Jupiter enters the sign of Aquarius.

Hindus utilize the power of Ganges water on many other occasions. It is carried to all parts of India by pilgrims or professional carriers and is used as a charm to repel evil spirits; it is also put into the mouths of the dying, and sprinkled over bridal couples to encourage fertility.

To die on the banks of the Ganges is believed to improve a person's chances of a happy fate in the afterlife, and for this reason the sick are carried to its shores and the dying immersed in its water. Many Hindus have committed suicide by hurling themselves into the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna in the hope of gaining a blissful future life. Those living within reach of the Ganges cremate their dead on its banks, and throw the ashes and unburnt bones into the water. If this is not possible, the ashes may be dispatched to one of the holy places on the Ganges to be cast into the sacred river.

The sanctity of water is firmly rooted in Hindu belief. When Brahmins perform their daily ablutions, they invoke the holy rivers, among them the Ganges and all its sacred branches. Often they offer oblations to water by casting into rivers small pieces of gold and silver, and sometimes pearls and other valuable jewels. When rivers were first spanned by railway bridges passengers threw coins into them in order to propitiate the divinities manifested in the rivers. While such customs have gradually become obsolete, the belief in the sanctity of the Ganges and other sacred rivers continues to be an important and enduring element of Hindu ideology.

(For purification by water, see also BAPTISM; WATER.)

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

GARLIC

ALTHOUGH MOHAMMED is recorded as saying, when he refused a dish containing garlic, 'I am a man who has close contact with others', garlic *(Allium sativum)* has a widespread reputation as a beneficent vegetable.

It probably originated in central Asia, and there is a Mohammedan tradition that garlic sprang up where Satan, as he was expelled from Paradise, placed his left foot, while the onion appeared from his right footprint.

The Jews' oriental origin is reflected in their liking for garlic and the Talmud's direction that numerous foods should be seasoned with it. Although the Crusaders have been credited with bringing it to Europe, it is clear that it was eaten in ancient times in both Greece and Italy, where it was thought to give strength and courage. Virgil tells how countrymen ate a salad called *moretum*, made from bruised garlic and thyme leaves, flour, cheese, oil and vinegar. Now, of course, no French or Italian meal is likely to omit garlic.

One of the earliest accounts of the magical properties attributed to garlic is in the writings of Theophrastus, the Greek philosopher who lived in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. He describes how the ancient Greeks placed it at crossroads to sustain and propitiate Hecate, underworld goddess of magic. With her pack of hell-hounds she was often to be found where roads met, as well as at tombs and scenes of crime, and her three-faced image was frequently erected at crossroads. Garlic was among the offerings placed before these statues.

According to Pliny, both garlic and onion were regarded as divine by the Egyptians and were invoked when an oath was made, and Juvenal, the Roman satirist, said that 'Each clove of Garlic hath a sacred flower'.

Poor Man's Treacle

The belief in garlic's magical qualities is found all over Europe, Asia Minor, India, China and Japan and the plant is widely believed to give protection against witchcraft and the Evil Eye; its Sanskrit name means 'Slayer of Monsters'. The 16th century Flemish botanist Clusius tells of German miners taking cloves of garlic down mines for protection against evil spirits. At Bologna in Italy, on the Festival of St John, everyone bought garlic to ensure a successful year free from poverty.

Garlic was placed in a new-born baby's cradle during the dangerous interval between birth and baptism, together with other protective substances such as salt and iron. In Sicily it was put into the beds of women during childbirth, and making the sign of the Cross with garlic charmed away certain kinds of tumour. Placed in an English child's socks it mitigated whooping-cough; while a Cuban might avert jaundice by wearing a necklace of 13 garlic cloves for 13 days.

Some of these beliefs are clearly only extensions of the actual and believed virtues of garlic as both food and medicine. In the process of time, garlic became thought of as a cure-all; in the 2nd century AD, the physician Galen called garlic *theriac*, which originally meant an antidote to poison and later a universal panacea. Chaucer and other writers refer to it as Poor Man's Treacle, which is a corruption of 'Theriac'.

This faith in garlic's beneficence stemmed partly from the Doctrine of Signatures, with its assertion that objects are related to each other even by insignificant attributes; a proposition that led to the belief that 'like cures like' (see DISEASE). In Lauremberg's *Apparatus Planterum* the author points out: 'The tissue of Garlic is ruddy: it expels blood. It has a hollow stalk, and it helps affections of the wind-pipe.'

Garlic is recommended to prevent sunstroke, cure dropsy, relieve hysteria and drive out intestinal worms. It was also thought to be a specific against leprosy, a cure for smallpox, and a protection against plague and other infectious fevers. It was reputed to make cocks more aggressive during cock-fighting, horses strong, and if placed in the ground it would cause moles to 'leap forth'.

Garlic's genuine values include an undoubted tonic and toning-up quality; it probably helps digestion and is used in lotions for skin disorders. In the First World War the raw juice of garlic, placed on swabs of sphagnum moss (a type of moss which grows in bogs) was used as a successful antiseptic dressing.

EILEEN GARRETT

CLAIMED BY MANY as the most remarkable of 20th-century psychic mediums, Eileen Garrett was born in Ireland in 1893. From earliest childhood she exhibited a faculty for clairvoyance and clairaudience (see CLAIRVOYANCE), and developed an ability to enter the trance state to 'escape from the too-painful conditions of living' with her unsympathetic relatives, as she wrote in her autobiography, *My Life* (1939).

After two unhappy marriages, and the loss of two sons, she was in the midst of a third deteriorating marriage in the early 1920s when she took up Spiritualism and discovered two 'controls', one named Uvani and the other Abdul Latif, who claimed to have been a Persian physician at the time of the Crusades. For a time she practised as a full-time medium under the guidance of Hewat McKenzie, the founder of the College of Psychic Science, but she became increasingly disillusioned with the triviality of the questions asked by those who came to consult her.

Deciding to give up her mediumship, she accepted an offer of marriage from an old friend; but she then heard a voice telling her to make the most of her present happiness, 'for it would not last', and within a week of the banns being published her husband-to-be was dead.

Mrs Garrett left England for the US in 1931, hoping to find a more pragmatic climate than that prevailing among English spiritualists, but for a time she was disappointed. In experiments with J.B. Rhine at Duke University (see ESP) she failed to achieve scores above average with the Zener cards; she maintained that this was because 'clairvoyance and telepathy depended upon an active radiation registering between two people or between an individual and an object', and that the cards had no 'radiation'.

A famous experiment in New York, however, enhanced her reputation. At a prearranged time she 'projected' herself to the house of a doctor in Newfoundland, and saw him with a bandage around his head. He explained that he had had an accident ('That's not possible' she heard someone in New York with her exclaim, 'I had a letter a few days ago and he was quite well then!'), and then asked her to describe objects on his table. After this he opened a book by Einstein and read a paragraph; in New York Eileen Garrett relayed the sense of what he was reading. The whole experiment lasted fifteen minutes, and the following day a telegram from the doctor announced the accident to his head; later his detailed notes confirmed all that Mrs Garrett had reported.

Fortean Picture Library

Eileen Garrett, a remarkable modern clairvoyant

Encouraged by her successes in clairvoyance, Mrs Garrett increasingly turned to this subject, gradually giving up her practice as a medium. As she later wrote:

> Now I believed I saw a certain principle behind all communication – namely that the subconscious mind was a vehicle capable of expanding indefinitely and able to contact all possible realms of understanding which it might choose to reach.

In 1934 she returned to England and co-operated in experiments with Dr William Brown at his laboratory in Oxford. He was anxious to investigate whether she was a case simply of multiple personality; under hypnosis, however, she merely recalled her childhood in detail, and was able to invoke Uvani only in trance.

During her stay in England, Mrs Garrett was persuaded by Nandor Fodor, research officer for the International Institute for Psychical Research, to investigate the haunting of Ash Manor in Sussex by a 'little old man'. She went into trance, and was 'possessed' – the wife of the owner of the house said that her face looked like that of the old man – and told a tale of betrayal in an odd medieval English.

It is only fair to report that Fodor later admitted that historical research had failed to verify any of the ghost's statements, and that scholars did not believe the medieval English to be authentic.

Eileen Garrett became increasingly interested in the scientific investigation of her abilities, and returned to America, where she collaborated with New York psychologist Lawrence LeShan. He spent more than 500 hours questioning her and devised a number of convincing experiments.

On one occasion, when Mrs Garrett was in Florida and LeShan was in New York, he put together a collection of disparate objects, including an ancient Babylonian clay tablet. Each was wrapped in tissue and put into a box, and the box put into a manila envelope. A second person then put each envelope into a larger envelope and numbered it: thus this person knew only the numbers of the envelopes, and LeShan had no knowledge of their contents.

While the materials were being assembled, a secretary from a nearby office had examined the clay tablet. Two weeks later, and nearly 1000 miles away, LeShan presented the envelopes to Eileen Garrett in Florida. When she picked up one envelope – later found to be the one containing the tablet – she said there was 'a woman associated with this'. She went on to describe the secretary in such detail – even mentioning two scars – that, LeShan said, it would have been possible to pick her out of a line-up of 10,000 women.

In 1951 Mrs Garrett was instrumental in setting up the Parapsychology Foundation, devoted to the scientific study of psi. She died in 1970.

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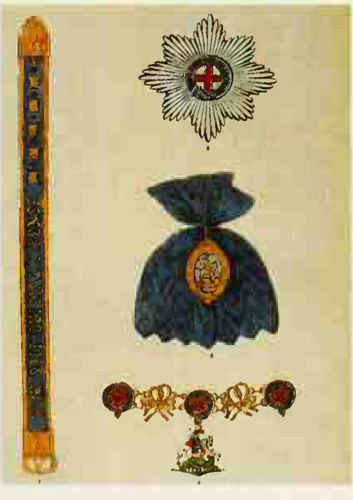
Garter

Part of the insignia worn by the members of The Most Noble Order of the Garter: founded by Edward III c1348, it is the highest order of knighthood, comprising the sovereign and 25 knights; according to legend it was established after Joan, Countess of Salisbury, accidentally dropped a garter while dancing with the King, who having restored it to her made the remark, '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*' (shame to him who thinks evil of this); garters worn by a bride are thought to bring good luck, and modern witches often wear garters as badges of rank.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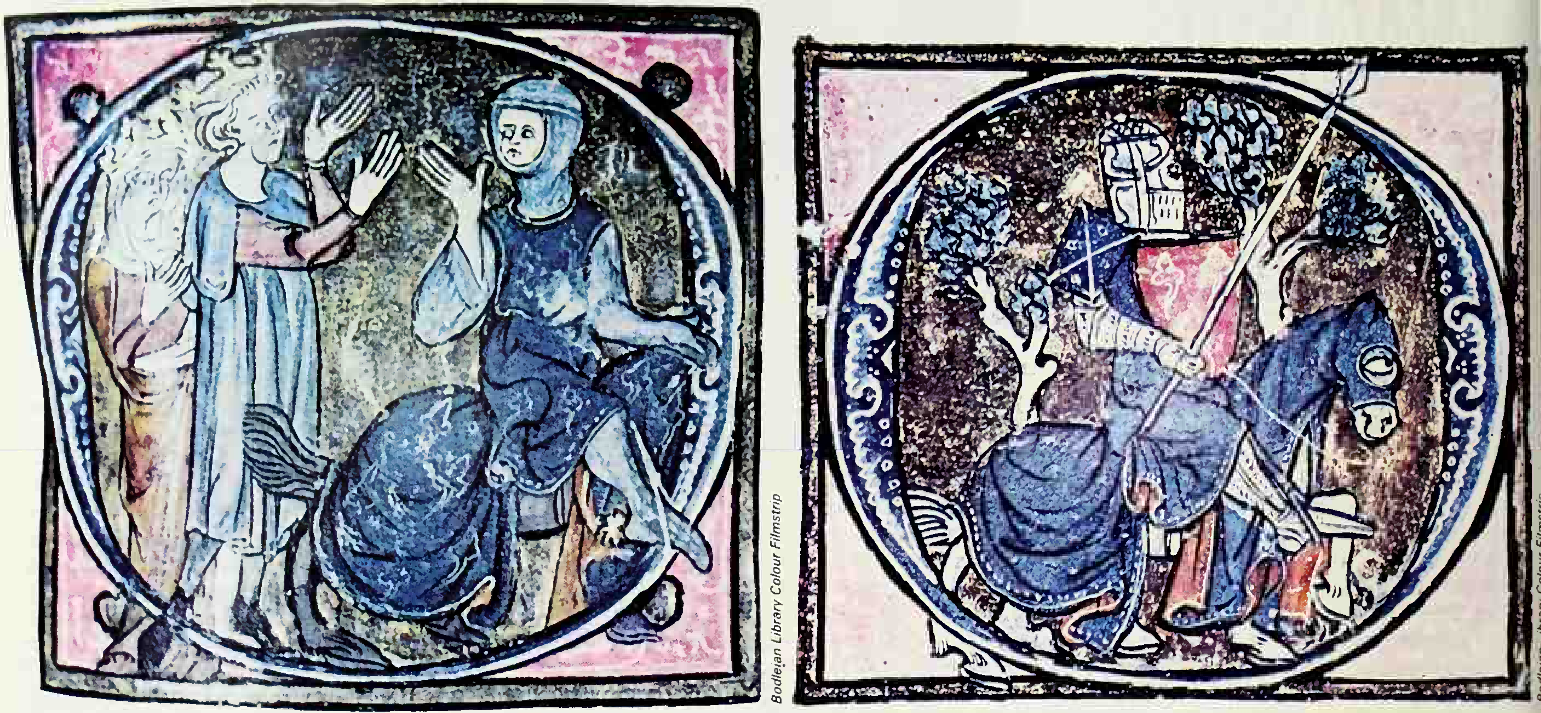
Gathas

The name given to certain sections of the *Zend-Avesta*, the sacred writings of the Zoroastrian religion; generally believed to have been composed by the prophet Zoroaster himself, they contain hymns and poems mainly addressed to the supreme god Ahura Mazdah; these holy writings are still used by the Parsees, the surviving followers of Zoroastrianism.
See ZOROASTRIANISM.



Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Gawain was one of the greatest heroes of the Round Table, famed for courage and courtesy. *Above* Setting out on a quest he takes leave of Arthur and Guinevere *(left)* and rides through a forest *(right)*. *Facing page* 14th century illustration to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. a story which may contain echoes of a ritual combat between Winter and Summer. Gawain cut off the Green Knight's head with an axe. The knight cheerfully picked it up and rode away. A year and a day later, Gawain had to stand a blow from the Green Knight in his turn

First a pagan hero, then the flower of Arthur's chivalry, Gawain failed in the crucial test of the search for the Grail

GAWAIN

THE FIRST of King Arthur's knights to dedicate himself to the search for the Grail was the one whose spiritual bankruptcy was most clearly demonstrated in the quest. Originally a hero of pagan legend, Gawain became the very model of a chivalrous knight, famous for courage, loyalty, generosity and courtesy. But in later stories he is overshadowed, first by Lancelot and then by Galahad.

His name may be derived from the Welsh *Gwallt-advwyn*, 'of the bright hair' or 'of the splendid hair', reinforcing the link between Gawain and the sun found in some of the French romances and in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. Gawain's strength increases all through the morning, as the sun's does, until noon when it wanes again. But little emphasis is placed on this and Gawain's solar connections have lost their significance in the stories which have survived.

Gawain appears in various Welsh tales as Gwalchmai, one of Arthur's leading captains. In *Peredur*, for instance, he is famous for his prowess as a fighter, for good faith, and for courtesy and tact. Arthur says of him, 'he does more with his fair words than we by dint of our arms'. In *Culhwch and Olwen* he is 'the best of walkers and the best of riders', who 'never came home without the quest he had gone to seek.'

In Geoffrey of Monmouth (see ARTHUR) Gawain is Arthur's nephew, a hothead and a notable warrior. In the campaign against the Romans he starts a skirmish when greatly outnumbered, because he is infuriated by the sneers of the enemy, and he strikes one opponent such a terrible blow with his sword that he splits him through helmet and skull down to the breast. He is killed in battle at Richborough when Arthur's army lands to settle accounts with the treacherous Mordred.

William of Malmesbury, writing a few years before Geoffrey, said that in 1087 the tomb of Arthur's noble nephew Walwin had been discovered on the Welsh coast. It was 14 feet long. In a sculpture of c1100 at Modena Cathedral in Italy, Galvaginus is one of the knights helping Arthur to rescue Guinevere.

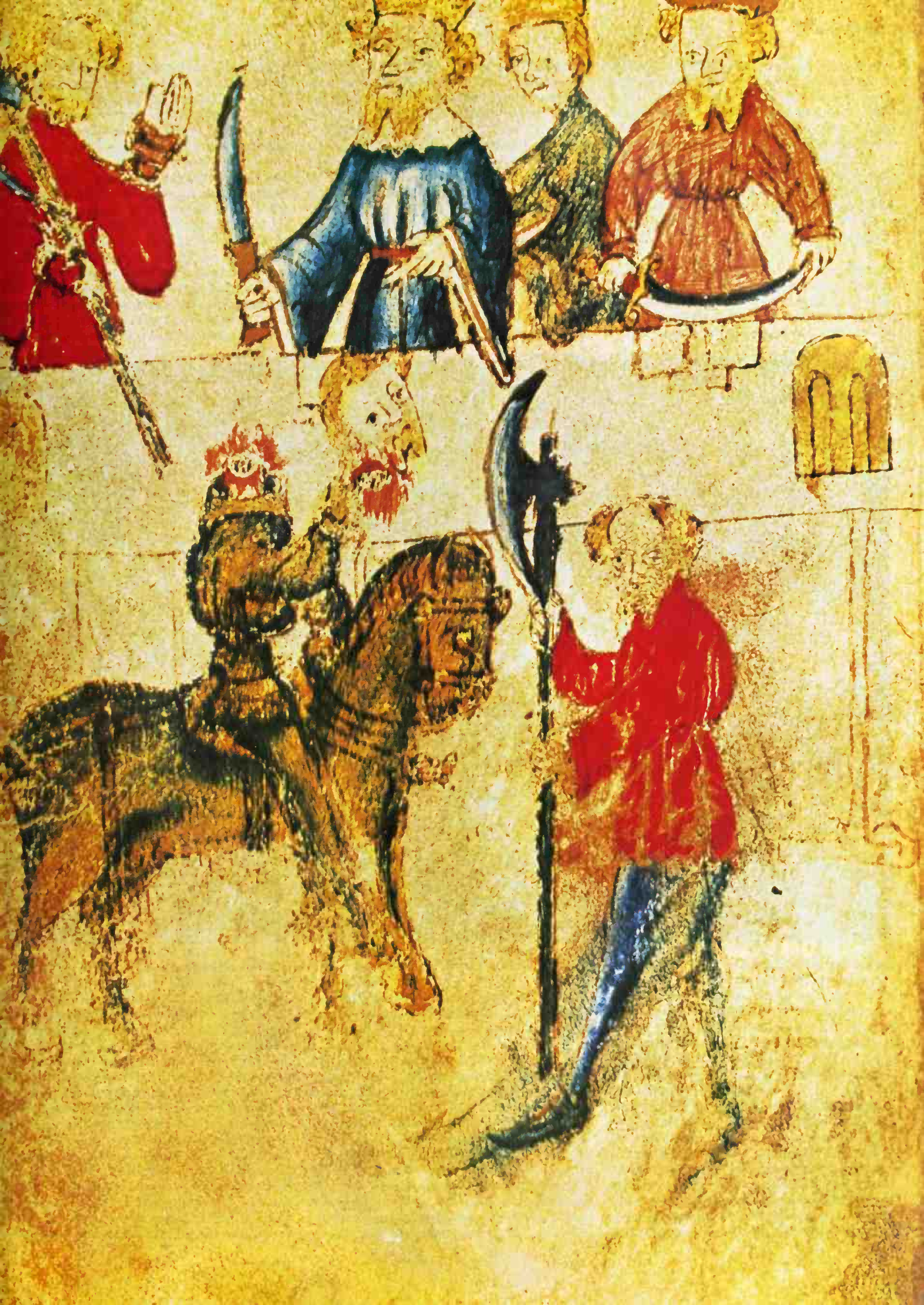
Chrétien de Troyes portrayed Gawain as the pattern of chivalry. No lady in distress ever appealed in vain to 'the good and gentle lord Gawain', and to equal or outdo him was the final test of heroic valour. The early 13th century German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach said of him in *Parzival* that: 'on the battlefield his heart was a fortress, towering so against sharp attacks that he could always be seen in the thick of the fray. Friend and foe acknowledged that his battlecry rang loud in pursuit of fame....'

The Holy Grail

In the Austrian Grail romance *Diu Krône* Gawain is successful, but generally he loses stature when the story-tellers take him out of his native element of courts and fair ladies, jousts and battles, and send him in search of the Grail. The first sequel added to Chrétien's *Conte del Graal* in the late 12th century contains a hauntingly mysterious account of Gawain's experiences at the Grail castle. Riding a horse which he allowed to carry him wherever it would, Gawain came to the sea and a wide causeway, stretching far out to sea. Trees grew on each side of the causeway and roofed it over, making it frighteningly dark. Gawain hesitated but his horse bore him on willy nilly, and at the end of the causeway he found a house, where he was greeted with excited joy and the words, 'Fair sir, God has brought you to us, and long we have desired your coming.'

Gawain was left alone in a spacious hall, in the middle of which was a bier covered with a great scarlet cloth emblazoned with a gold cross. Lying on the bier was a corpse, and on its breast half of a broken sword. Presently a king and his courtiers came in and sat down to feast, with Gawain honourably placed at the king's side. The food was served by 'a rich grail' which moved about by itself, and which also filled the golden cups with wine. At the end of the meal the company vanished and Gawain was left alone with the bier. Now he saw a lance with blood flowing down its shaft, standing upright in a vessel of silver. The king returned, bringing the other half of the broken sword. He asked Gawain to fit the two halves together, to see if they would reunite. Gawain tried, but without success.

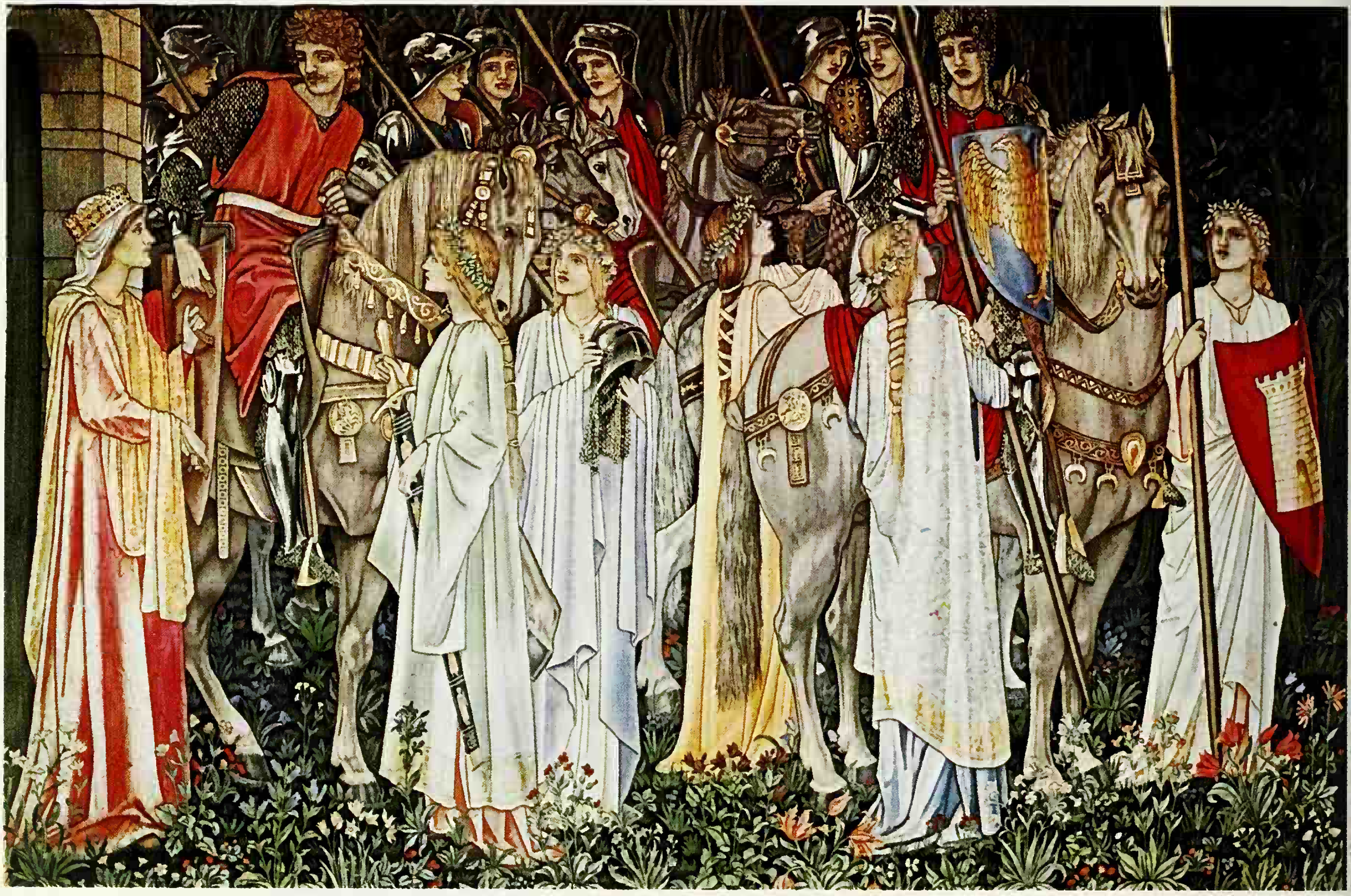
The king sadly told Gawain that he had failed in his mission, but thanked him for his courage in making the journey and offered him any gift he cared to ask. Gawain, who had been riding all night, was very sleepy by now but he forced his eyes open and asked to be told the truth about what he had seen. The king explained that the lance was the one which pierced Christ on the cross, and that the sword was the one which struck the fell blow that destroyed the kingdom of Logres. By this time Gawain could listen no longer and fell asleep. When he woke he was lying in a field. The house of mysteries had disappeared. Bitterly reproaching himself for not



staying awake, Gawain rode away through a countryside rich in woods, meadows and streams. The country people hailed him with, 'Sir, you have both slain and healed us.' What had been the arid Waste Land the night before had turned green again the moment he asked about the bleeding lance, but if he had kept awake to learn why the Grail served, then: 'No one could tell the great joy that would have come of asking.'

In this story Gawain has at least partially succeeded. In another French tale, *Perlesvaus*, he fails entirely. He is told that when he reaches the Grail castle he must ask a question (this is a stock motif in the romances) and he is told what question to ask. But when he sees the Grail, he 'is lost in thought and such great joy fills his mind that he thinks of nothing but God.' He is despairingly urged to speak, for this is his last opportunity, but he fails to hear the appeals and remains wrapped in contemplative silence.

According to the prose *Lancelot* of the early 13th century, Gawain failed for a far less creditable reason. He saw the Grail as a chalice, 'the richest vessel that might be beheld by the eye of mortal man', but it was carried by a girl of such astonishing beauty that unfortunately the hero was far more interested in the girl than in the Grail. For this he was thrown out of the Grail castle, dragged through the streets of the town in a cart and pelted with dung and mud.



Gawain was the first of Arthur's knights to swear the quest of the Grail but he failed miserably: the Arming of the Knights setting out in search of the Grail, tapestry by William Morris, design by Edward Burne-Jones

Blind to the Sacred

In the *Queste del Saint Graal* (see GALAHAD) Gawain is shown failing totally because he does not understand that the search for the Grail is a spiritual quest, not a customary knightly adventure. Relying on his own resources of courage and honour, he is incapable of seeing that he cannot win the Grail without God's help. He is unfavourably contrasted with the saintly Galahad as part of the *Queste*'s attack on the worldly values of chivalry and on the ideal of the knight as the supremely self-reliant man instead of the supremely God-reliant man. As P.M. Matarasso puts it, 'He is so rooted in the creed of his caste, so embedded in the secular, that the sacred passes him by unrecognized'. The *Queste* says that 'he enjoyed a more widespread popularity than any man alive' but one of its numerous moralizing hermits tells him that his faults are lechery and pride, and the lack of the Christian virtues of chastity and humility.

This picture of Gawain colours his character in Malory, though at the end, when the Round Table is finally brought to disaster, he is given back something of his old high quality. Opposing his half-brother Mordred and brother Agravaine, he holds loyal to Arthur; wounded in combat with Lancelot, his last actions are attempts to heal the breach between Lancelot and Arthur. He dies, and is buried in a chapel in Dover Castle and, Malory says, 'there yet all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound is seen that Sir Lancelot gave him in battle.'

The Beheading Game

In Britain meanwhile, Gawain remained an admired hero and he is the central character of a magnificent 14th-century poem, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Arthur's court was at dinner in Camelot when a trumpet sounded outside and in came a tall and terrifying figure. His skin was as green as grass, his clothes were green, his horse was green, and he carried holly in one hand and a monstrous axe in the other. The Green Knight proposed what he cheerfully called a game. He would allow the Round Table's champion to deal him a blow with the axe, on condition that he had the right to return the blow a year and a day later. Gawain accepted the challenge, took the axe, and struck the Green Knight a blow that cut off his head. The Green Knight merely picked it up and rode off.

When the time came, Gawain rode north to seek the Green Knight and came to a handsome castle, where he was welcomed by the lord of the castle and by the lord's surpassingly lovely young wife. The lady made every effort to seduce Gawain, who resisted her with great difficulty. Gawain and the lord struck a bargain that each would give the other whatever he acquired each day. Gawain failed to keep the bargain for he did not hand over to the lord a magic girdle which the lady gave him, telling him it would keep him from all harm. On the appointed day Gawain rode out and met the Green Knight. He readied himself for a lethal blow from the axe but the Green Knight gave him only a light tap that just nicked the flesh. He then explained that he was really the lord of the castle in disguise, that he had not killed Gawain because the knight had honourably refrained from making love to the lady, but that he gashed him for concealing the gift of the girdle.

The story ends with everyone happy except Gawain, who feels he has disgraced himself and laments 'the faithlessnesss that was found in me'. His fault was to break his word to the lord of the castle to save his own life, for he hoped that the magic girdle would protect him from the Green Knight's axe. It is a fault he is bitterly aware of but one which few human beings could readily condemn, and Arthur's court agree that each knight of the fellowship shall thereafter wear a green belt for Sir Gawain's sake, as a mark of outstanding honour to him and of renown to the Round Table.

The principal incidents in the poem, including the beheading game and the trial of the hero's virtue, occur in earlier tales but there is no precedent for the greenness of the Green Knight. It has been suggested that the uncanny challenger was green because it was the fairy colour, or alternatively that the beheading challenge is based on fertility ritual, green being the colour of vegetation (see GREEN). There are probably traces in the Green Knight of a figure representing Winter who fights an annual combat against Summer but, whatever pagan motifs have survived in the poem, the attitude of the author is that of a Christian, though a Christian far more admiring of the code of chivalry than the author of the *Queste*. RICHARD CAVENDISH

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URI GELLER

A YOUNG ISRAELI who sprang to prominence on television in 1973, Uri Geller (then aged 26) initiated a worldwide controversy that still continues. He claimed to be able to bend a range of metallic objects such as spoons and keys, and to be able to stop and start watches and clocks, solely by 'mind power'. He apparently successfully demonstrated this ability in the studio, and set off a wave of similar phenomena, particularly among children.

Most remarkable were the hundreds of claims that broken watches had started of their own accord, and household cutlery had been found inexplicably bent in many homes where his television performances had been viewed.

A number of distinguished scientists requested permission to investigate Geller under controlled laboratory conditions, and subsequently reported that his claims appeared to have been fully validated. Subsequent investigations into many of these experiments, however, suggested that his movements had not been observed with sufficient care, and the former stage conjuror James Randi, who had set himself up as a virulent investigator of psychic phenomena, was able to demonstrate, also on television, that he could replicate many of Geller's feats with ease.

Uri Geller was taken up by the parapsychologist Andrija Puharich, and at one time claimed that his powers dated from a day in his childhood when a 'dome of light' had landed close by him – a tale that he later denied in his autobiography.

Following the furore provoked by the claims and counterclaims of his supporters and detractors, Geller gave up his international stage demonstrations and retired from public view for a number of years. He later re-appeared, apparently a millionaire, and claiming that he had earned his wealth by map-dowsing with a pendulum (see DOWSING; PENDULUM) for mineral deposits such as copper and gold in distant parts of the world.

GEMATRIA

JEWISH CABALISTS AND OCCULTISTS valued the Old Testament because they believed it to have been directly inspired by God but, precisely because they valued it so highly, they searched beneath the surface of the text for hidden meanings, lying like concealed treasure below the surface of the ground.

Some of them treated the scriptures as if they were written in various kinds of abstruse code. To decipher the meaning beneath the surface of the words they used complicated and ingenious mathematical and anagrammatic methods. These were of considerable antiquity, but were first brought prominently into play in the Cabala by a German-Jewish scholar named Eleazar of Worms in the 13th century.

One of the methods was gematria, which depended on the fact that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet also did duty as numbers. This meant that the letters of any word could be changed into numbers, added up and converted into another word which added to the same total. For example, Genesis (18.2) says of Abraham at one point 'and lo three men stood by him'. The Hebrew words for 'and lo three men' add up to 701, which is also the total of the letters of 'these are Michael, Gabriel and Raphael', so it was deduced that the three men were really the three great archangels.

In a celebrated passage in the Book of Esther (3.11), 'And the king said to Haman, "The money is given to you...",' the Hebrew word for money adds up to 165. As the Hebrew for 'gallows' also adds to 165, so the passage was interpreted as a subtly concealed prediction of the fate in store for the wicked Haman, who was to be hanged on the gallows.

An interesting example of a genuine use of gematria in the Old Testament comes in the Book of Daniel, where the actual identity of the Seleucid tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes is cloaked under the name Nebuchadnezzar, probably chosen because both names add to 423. Another comes in Genesis 14.14, where Abraham is described as having 318 servants. This curiously precise number probably comes from Eliezer, the only servant of Abraham's whose name was remembered, for the name Eliezer adds to 318.

A prediction of the coming of the Messiah was discovered hidden in Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49.10: 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh comes'. The Hebrew word Messiah adds up to 358, and so do the words for 'until Shiloh comes'. Another hint of the same kind was decoded from Numbers 21.9: 'So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole.' The Hebrew for 'the serpent of Moses' again adds up to the Messiah's total of 358. Christian Cabalists took the Old Testament passage as a prophecy of the Crucifixion, and so in medieval Christian art the crucified Saviour is sometimes represented by a serpent coiled around a cross.

Two other methods employed were temurah and notarikon. Temurah involves anagrams and letter substitutions. Notarikon takes the first or last letters of the words in a phrase or passage and joins them to make a new word or, the other way round, expands a word into a phrase. The first word of the Bible, *berashith*, 'in the beginning', has been subjected to innumerable operations of this kind. For example, if each letter is taken as the initial letter of a word, one result is 'In the beginning the Elohim [God] saw that Israel would accept the law.' Another result is 'You shall worship my first-born, my first, whose name is Jesus', an interpretation which helped to convert a 16th-century Jewish cabalist to Christianity.

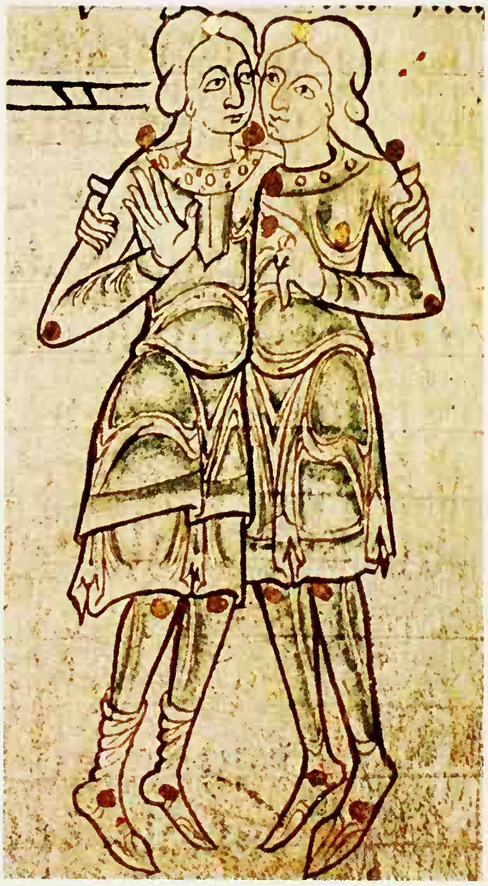
The same methods can be used with Greek, whose letters also doubled as numbers, and the early Christians eagerly adopted them. Jesus Christ as Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (of the Greek alphabet), was symbolised by the dove because the letters alpha and omega add to 801, and so does the Greek word for dove, *peristera*. The fish is a symbol of Christ because the Greek word for fish, *ichthus*, can be expanded by notarikon into Iesous CHristos THeou Uios Soter, which means 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour'. The most famous example of gematria is the number of the Great Beast of Revelation, 666, which has aroused much speculation and controversy over the centuries (see GREAT BEAST).

GEMINI

THE SUN ENTERS GEMINI, the third sign of the zodiac, on 20 or 21 May, leaving on 21 or 22 June. Gemini, the 'heavenly twins', is traditionally held to be ruled by Mercury, and the combination of the mercurial quality of this planet with the natural duality represented by the twins is supposed responsible for the elusive and contradictory nature exhibited by those born under this sign.

Gemini natives are said to be naturally two-faced: no matter how hard they try to be straightforward and honest, their self-interest will always tempt them to be unscrupulous. In good times they can be charming, happy and imaginative; but they are likely to fall without warning into sullen stolidity and pessimism; this is because they can reflect every change in their surroundings. On the whole, however, they adapt well to change, which they are constantly seeking; and as a result they seldom lose control of themselves, or of a situation, employing their ingenuity to cope with any sudden crisis.

At their best, Geminians make very entertaining companions and compelling conversationalists; but when they become concerned only for themselves they grow cunning and evasive, and able to talk their way out of any situation. Indeed, it is their versatility that can be their downfall: they find it difficult to devote themselves to anything for long, whether a profession or a loved one, for while they may be deeply involved with one side of their nature, with the other they will immediately begin an intellectual analysis of their motives. It is perhaps this that has given them the reputation for never taking things seriously. Among careers that prove successful for Geminians are those of broker, journalist, barrister or diplomat – in brief, whatever combines a need for quick-wittedness with the probability of a constant change of surroundings. A military career has no attraction; as the Roman astrologer Manilius wrote, they 'wish war and trumpets far away.'



Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

The constellation of Gemini represents the 'heavenly twins' Castor and Pollux: illustration from a 12th-century treatise on astrology

Gemini children must be supervised with care, for although they have good intellects they will always try to find a way round the labour of learning. Parents and teachers find it difficult to be severe with them because they can be so charming, and very soon they adopt bad habits that are almost impossible to eradicate.

When Gemini is the ascendant sign it traditionally determines a tall, upright body, with a long face and piercing eyes; movements, particularly of the hands, are quick and active. The constitution may be weak, with a tendency to respiratory infection.

The Moon in Gemini is not taken as a good indication, for it is said to portend a nervous, restless temperament, which can reveal itself in ceaseless chatter and fidgeting. However, with other more favourable aspects, the Moon in Gemini can denote a quick imagination and practicality; the sort of temperament which can make a good actor or a romantic novelist.

GEOMANCY

GEOMANCY IS THE PRACTICE of divination from random marks made on the earth or by pen on paper. These marks are combined in a binary fashion to produce one of a selection of 16 possible geomantic figures (see table opposite). The answer to the divinatory question is then drawn from this selection of figures and their arrangement.

The word comes from the Greek *gaia*, meaning earth, and *manteia*, meaning divination. The totally unconnected Chinese system of house and land siting known as *feng-shui* (see FENG-SHUI) has been erroneously translated as 'geomancy'. The term has also been associated with the location of 'ley lines' (see LEY LINES), but should strictly be applied solely to the traditional western mode of dot-divination.

The practice of geomancy can be reliably traced back to the 9th-century Islamic divinatory practice of *khatt-al-raml*, which means 'lines in the sand'. The diviner first posed the question with a rhymed Arabic incantation. Then with the utmost haste he drew a quantity of lines or ripples in the sand, without counting. He then wiped out groups of two ripples at a time, leaving an odd or even number of ripples. These formed the basis of the geomantic figures.

This practice had its earliest focus in Egypt and in the Moslem-ruled southern shore of the Mediterranean in the 9th century AD. There are earlier references to an Indian origin, which is probably spurious, and to Archimedes (278-212 BC) reputedly drawing geomantic figures in the sand during the siege of Syracuse to determine its outcome.

From its origin in 9th-century North Africa, where it is still practised today, geomancy travelled south across the Sahara desert with the camel trains into Nigeria, Dahomey (Benin), Togo and Ghana. Under the Yorubas it became part of the divinatory technique called *ifa*, which used chains of cowrie shells or a handful of palm nuts on elaborate wooden divining trays, to generate the same 16 figures that the Arabs generated in the sand. The practice of *ifa* divination was later taken, as part of indigenous religious practices such as Voodoo, to the Caribbean, South America, and the United States by the victims of the slave trade in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Geomancy also travelled with Arab traders down the east coast of Africa to the island of Madagascar in the late 9th century; there it became mixed with the Malay practice of *vintana*, resulting in 'sikidy' divination, which retains the same geomantic figures but gives them new names and interpretations. A third migration of geomancy went, probably in the 14th century, from the Arab world to the Byzantine Greek world, where it was called *rabolion*.

The last and most interesting line of transmission was via the Arab conquest of Spain. Although Muslim invaders entered Spain first in 711, the practice of geomancy does not seem to have been recorded there before the 12th century. At this time Arabic manuscripts were beginning to be translated into Latin, and geomancy became, after astrology, probably the most popular form of divination in Europe. Here its sandy origins were forgotten, and it was practised purely with a pen on paper or parchment.

The first geomantic text translated into Latin, some time between 1119 and 1157, was Hugh of Santalla's *Ars Geomantiae*. Soon after, Gerard of Cremona translated a number of important works from Arabic into Latin, including a geomantic text. These texts set off a flood of works in Latin by writers such as Plato of Tivoli, Robert of Chester and more famous scholars such as Michael Scot (c1175-c1235) and Albertus Magnus (1193-1280).

The art of geomancy was developed by Ramon Lull (1235-1315), a Majorcan monk who invented a kind of cog-wheeled logic machine based directly on the binary nature of geomancy (see LULL). By the thirteenth century, kings such as Wenceslaus of Bohemia and Richard II of England had their own geomantic reference manuscripts prepared for them.

The practice reached its apogee with Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1468-1535) and the Englishman Robert Fludd (born 1574). Late in the 18th century interest in geomancy revived, and again in the late 19th century with its inclusion in the syllabus of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN).

Each geomantic figure is made up of four levels, each level containing either one or two dots. This means there are 16 possible combinations. The names of the figures, although originally Arabic, are usually given in Latin. They range from Via, which consists of four single dots one above the other to Populus, which consists of four levels of two dots.

The name of the figure is partially a reflection of its shape, Via meaning a road or journey, while Populus means a crowd, it being the 'fullest' possible figure. The other fourteen characters consist of various combinations of one dot and two.

The 16 geomantic figures are attributed to the twelve signs of the zodiac, with some double attributions. They range from Puer, the boy (attributed to Aries) to Laetitia, joy (attributed to Pisces), with the head and tail of the Moon attributed to Caput Draconis, the head of the dragon, and Cauda Draconis, the dragon's tail, respectively.

The planets and elements are also allocated to the 16 figures, and each is also given a 'ruling spirit'. From these attributions, geomantic figures were often projected onto astrological horoscopes, mainly to answer immediate 'horary' questions rather than to interpret birthcharts.

The technique of geomancy is best explained by following the steps of a theoretical divination. Whichever medium is used, sand or paper, the question must first be accurately framed to avoid ambiguity in the answer. The diviner then makes 16 lines of dashes or dots, with whatever instrument he has chosen, while concentrating on the question.

In the first row of dots the total is determined and, depending on whether the resultant number is odd or even, one or two dots are marked on the first line of a fresh piece of paper. The same observation is made for each of the subsequent 15 lines.

The resultant page has 16 lines, each containing either one or two dots. These are divided into four groups of 4, called the 'Mothers'. The first group of four lines might look like this

odd number of dots *
even number of dots * *
odd number of dots *
even number of dots * *

This geomantic figure is named Amissio, meaning loss. The subsequent Mother figures are derived in the same way from the remaining lines and the results placed beside the first figure.

Let us suppose that the four generated Mother figures in this case happen to be Amissio (loss), Fortuna Major (great fortune), Puella (girl), and Fortuna Minor (lesser fortune). Immediately the diviner can derive a preliminary answer to his question: 'there will be a loss of some sort, followed by considerable luck which will come through a girl or woman connected with the proposed venture'.

The next step is to combine elements of the four Mother figures into four Daughter figures, and from these are derived four Nephew figures, which in turn produce two Witness figures. The combination of these last two geomantic figures produces the Judge figure, by means of which the diviner attempts to judge the outcome of the whole question. Suppose that the final outcome of these manipulations is:

* *
* * Albus
*
* *

This is considered a good figure, confirming the diviner's earlier conclusions. An added interpretation might be (from the planetary correspondence) that the venture will be mercurial and a little unstable.

The technique of geomancy thus does not need elaborate equipment, and can be practised with limited preparation. It is easy to see why such a style of divination might have appealed to the wandering desert Bedouin of the 9th century.

Modern practice lays more emphasis upon the astrological aspects of geomancy, but the practice is otherwise the same as it was over one thousand years ago.

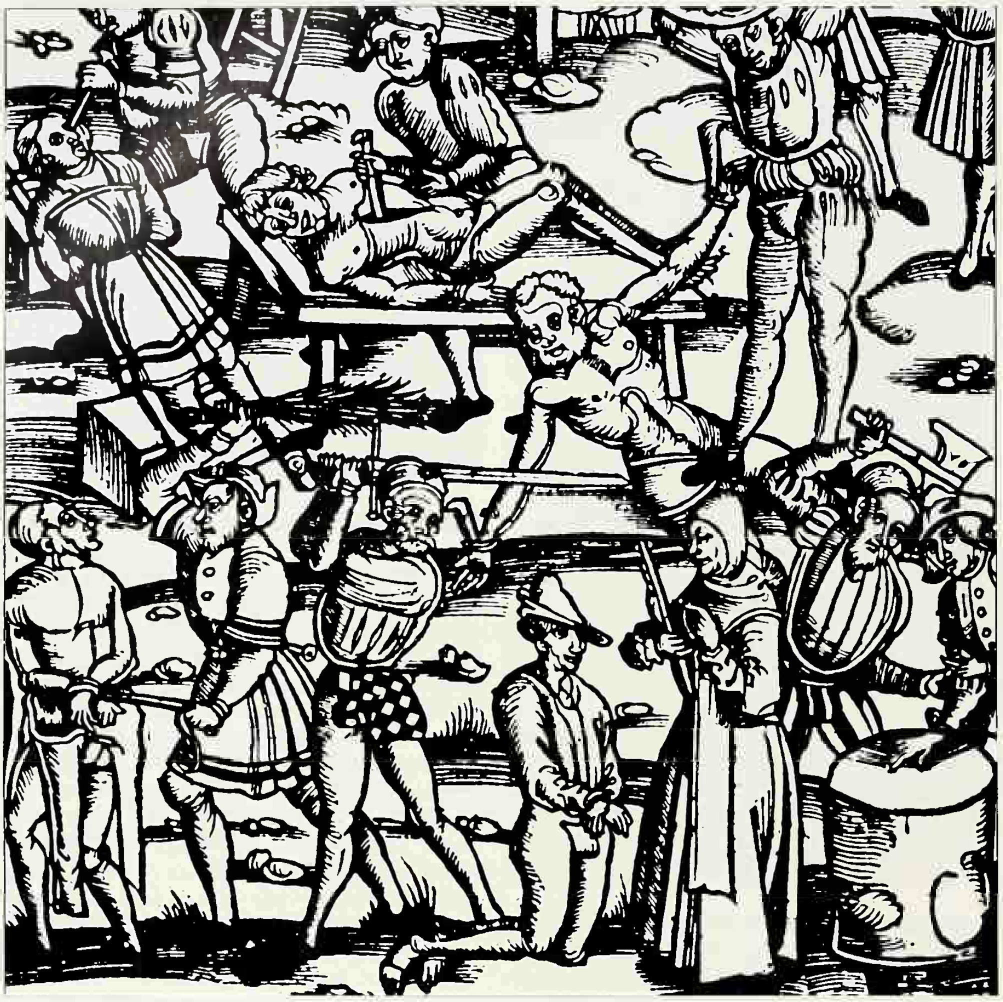
STEPHEN SKINNER

FURTHER READING: Agrippa, *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* (Askin, London, 1978); W. Bascom, *Ifa Divination* (Indiana Univ. Press, 1969); F. Hartmann, *The Principles of Astrological Geomancy* (Rider, 1913); F. King and S. Skinner, *Techniques of High Magic* (Destiny, Rochester, 1991); S. Skinner, *Terrestrial Astrology*, (Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1980); S. Skinner, *The Oracle of Geomancy* (Warner Destiny, NY, 1977).

Hutchinson Library

A Dogon diviner practising his geomantic art

	Name of Figure	Zodiac Sign	Planet		Name of Figure	Zodiac Sign	Planet
* * * * *	Puer	Aries	Mars	* * * * * *	Acquisitio	Sagittarius	Jupiter
* * * * * *	Amissio	Taurus	Venus	* * * * * *	Carcer	Capricorn	Saturn
* * * * * * *	Albus	Gemini	Mercury	* * * * * * *	Tristitia	Aquarius	Saturn
* * * * * * * *	Populus	Cancer	Moon	* * * * * * *	Laetitia	Pisces	Jupiter
* * * * * * *	Fortuna Major	Leo	Sun	* * * * *	Cauda Draconis	Moon's Node	Saturn, Mars
* * * * * *	Conjunctio	Virgo	Mercury	* * * * *	Caput Draconis	Moon's Node	Jupiter. Venus
* * * * *	Puella	Libra	Venus	* * * * * *	Fortuna Minor	Leo	Sun
* * * * * * *	Rubeus	Scorpio	Mars	* * * *	Via	Cancer	Moon



Cornell University Library

In Germany the law ordered that suspected witches should be tortured into confessing; 16th century methods of torture included disembowelling, beheading, gouging out the eyes, cutting off the ear or hand, and flogging

Witch trials began comparatively late in Germany but the scale, ferocity and ruthlessness of the mass persecutions of Franconia and the Rhineland were unparalleled in Europe

GERMAN WITCHCRAFT

ALWAYS UNJUSTLY PERSECUTED, the victim of a witch trial was the defendant in legal proceedings which followed the judicial procedure laid down by the Inquisition; this contained certain features which automatically put the accused at a disadvantage, particularly in that he or she was not allowed a defence. Witches could be seized and imprisoned merely 'on suspicion' – in other words, on circumstantial evidence alone.

During local outbreaks of witch hysteria, sometimes leading to hundreds of convictions, many communities erected so-called 'witch towers' or 'witches' houses' which served as special jails for this type of prisoner, and in which incredibly sadistic outrages took place. Defence witnesses were not even admitted to the witch trials and relatives of an accused person were allowed to visit only on condition that they agreed to try and persuade him or her to make a confession of witchcraft activities.

The majority of court records are of a monotonously stereotyped nature. The accused victims made their confessions – usually extracted under torture – according to a standard formula, prepared by the local torturer, and based on those used in the trials against demon-worship dating back to the 4th century. The Emperors Constantine, Valentine and Valens had established the use of the Roman penal code against sorcerers, as supporters of a subversive pagan group; the formulae of confession continued to be used by executioners and torturers during both heresy trials and witch persecutions over a thousand years later.

The sentence was of equally stereotyped severity. In the majority of cases the accused witch was sentenced to death by burning, although he or she might be strangled or executed with the sword beforehand as an act of clemency. If torture failed to produce a confession from the more resolute defendants, they might be sent into exile; this was more common during the later phases of witch persecution, when those permanently invalided by torture were often pushed over the border in carts. The reality of law was experienced as the justice of terror, the essence of which consists in the fact that the terror could not openly be referred to by name.

The principle of suspicion made such a climate of terror possible. To be denounced as a witch was enough to destroy the lives of both rich and poor alike. Merely associating with a witch, or with a relative suspected of witchcraft, was thought to be proof of one's own guilt. Devil-worship was believed to be transmitted to a child either by its godmother, skilled in magic, or through its own mother, shortly after birth.

There is a basic sociological difference between a magic-orientated culture, believing in the existence of men and women gifted with the power of sorcery, and the notorious witch persecutions of the 12th to 18th centuries. It lies in the belief that 'we', as members of an orthodox Christian community, neither wish nor are able to practise magic, but that there are others, outsiders, apostates, enemies of civilized man, who can perform these arts.

As far as the man in the street is concerned, the victim must have been guilty of witchcraft; otherwise it follows that the Church, the courts and the government have been accessories in the most terrible murder. But this adoption of the persecution ideology into the public consciousness always remained ambivalent. There was an element of doubt in nearly every individual case, if not in general. This is apparent in one of the first German testimonies, that of Mathias Widman, who was Court Chaplain to the Elector Friedrich von der Pfalz in Heidelberg in 1475. On the one hand Mathias Widman describes the horrible rites performed by witches, and the heretical Gazariorum sect, only to make an exception of those people known personally to him who have been indicted for witchcraft.

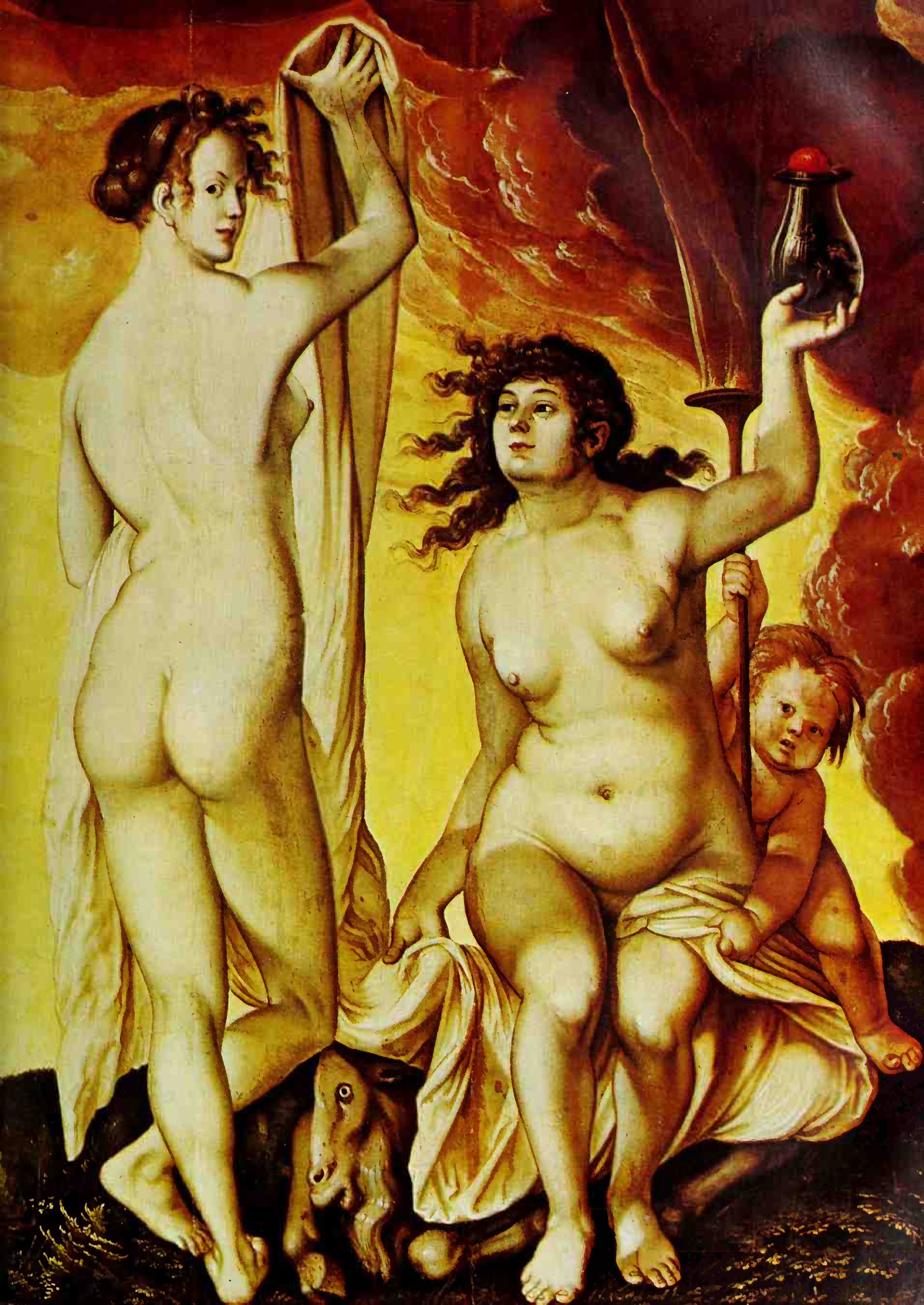
Children on Trial

Particularly striking is the adoption of these ideas by children and youths in those areas where the trials had been in process for some time. Gangs of children hounded suspected witches with unusual venom, before the unfortunate victims were finally imprisoned. They accused each other of sorcery and boasted that they could bewitch people as if it were a game, without understanding the serious implications of their actions. They invented imaginary stories of nightly feasts and revels, reminiscent of delusions caused by fever. The authorities pounced on such tenuous information and children's trials were frequent, at which small children would appear not only as witnesses but also as defendants.

The most comprehensive account of these conditions is given by Friedrich Merzbacher in his book *Die Hexenprozesse in Franken (Witch Trials in Franconia)* published in 1957. He gives a detailed account of the wave of witchcraft trials in the Bishopric of Wurzburg in the 17th century, where 900 people were tried in the years 1623-1631 alone, and the even more notorious Bamberg trials of the decade 1623-1633 (see BAMBERG WITCHES).

It seems highly probable that some of the major figures in this network of persecution were psychopaths and people suffering from paranoia. At the same time, the presence at

Witches were popularly believed to be able to ruin crops and wreak havoc on the countryside: in this painting by Hans Baldung Grien two witches, accompanied by a goat and a dwarfish child, invoke a storm; one of the witches holds up a bottle containing an imp she has captured



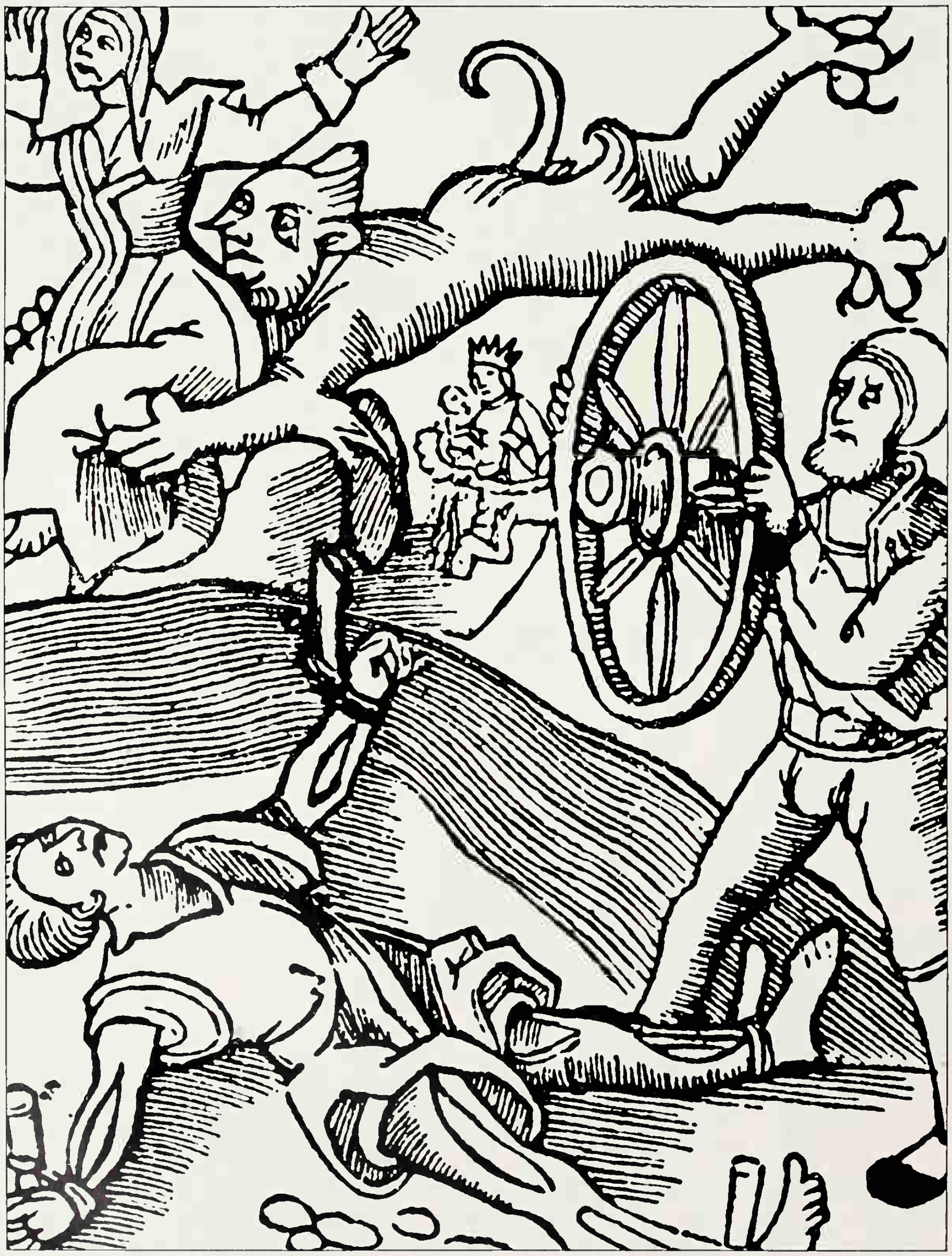
these trials of credulous and perhaps intimidated local dignitaries, as well as those who commanded the respect of the people – priests of both denominations, lawyers, scholars and writers – helped to guarantee recognition of the witchcraft ideology and its perpetuation.

Crime and Corruption

There are, however, many examples of witch-finders being motivated by criminal urges to line their own pockets through blackmail and exploitation. Jakob Bithner, an official of the province of Styria, provides just one example of this corruption. He was originally given the task of ridding the countryside of vagrants, mostly disbanded mercenaries; he took it on himself to include 'those criminals who dabble in sorcery', and eventually became a professional witchfinder. Similarly, a soldier named Geiss of Lindenheim offered his services to the town's officials as a witchfinder, hinting that the church and a local bridge could be repaired by extorting money from the richer citizens. Geiss instituted a regime of terror, until public indignation forced him to flee.

The infamous Count Balthasar Voss or Noss, who carried on his activities for 15 years, boasted that he hoped to achieve 1000 convictions. In 1603 the Supreme Court of the Holy Roman Empire intervened to put an end to his excesses. Many persecutors attracted a large number of followers, but they required the legitimate sanction of a secular or ecclesiastical body. At Esslingen, near Stuttgart, for instance, the fanatical witch-finder Nagogeorgus was supported in his actions by the judge of the nearby village of Wiessenstein. Sometimes, however, individual itinerant witch-finders were seized by enlightened magistrates and prevented from doing any more harm. An executioner's assistant from Eichstatt, who had started rumours of witchcraft, was punished at Nuremberg. Hans Schock from Furstenfelden in Austria, who had tried to earn money by denouncing witches in Strasburg and Basle, was finally sentenced by a court to death by drowning.

Spreadeagled on his back, a victim of the German witch-hunting mania is confronted by one of his torturers in this 16th century illustration; beyond him a woman is seized by an evil demon



Hexenprozesse

The relationship between the men in authority, on the one hand, and their atrocities on the other, was far from simple. The situation was not purely one of induced delusion; there was also the factor of revenge. This is particularly evident in the account of a man named Kothmann in Lemgo. During the first wave of trials in the area, Kothmann's mother was burned as a witch, and he was forced to flee and roam the country as a poverty-stricken law student. When he finally returned to Lemgo he succeeded in being elected to the position of mayor, and set about revenging himself on all those families who had held positions of authority in the town at the time of his mother's death. Kothmann remained in office until his death in 1684 and was responsible for the execution of 90 people.

Repeated efforts to keep the hysteria in check were made by a number of lawyers and others in positions of authority. In 1628 Vice-Chancellor Hahn of Bamberg became a victim because of his known leniency towards witches. The outstanding figure, however, is the Jesuit Father Friedrich von Spee. As a result of his experiences as confessor to the witches of Würzburg, he wrote a book, *Cautio Criminalis,* in which he examined and exposed from his first-hand knowledge the whole process of witch persecution from a sociological standpoint. His work was published anonymously in 1631; he was forbidden to make his views known, and was disposed of discreetly by being sent as confessor to those sick with the plague.

A Sympathy for Witches

Spee sympathized with the predicament of accused witches who were only entitled to the services of a confessor if they first guaranteed that they would not recant their previous confessions. He questioned whether witches really existed and, showing a remarkable understanding of the group psychology which underlay the persecutions, he came to the conclusion that the impulse which led to the witch trial originated at the lowest level of society and worked its way up; that the persecutions were engendered by the common people themselves, 'the irrational and, generally speaking, jealous and base rabble'. 'If the authorities did not immediately seize upon baseless rumours' says Spee, 'there would be a great outcry that the officials themselves were afraid for their wives and friends, and that they (the common people) were being hoodwinked by the rich.'

The publication of this book at such a period in history, by a man who had reason to fear for his life, shows that it is possible even in such circumstances to examine the process of terror and to see it clearly for what it was. (See EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS.) WANDA VON BAEYER-KATTE

FURTHER READING: John A. Rush, *Witchcraft and Sorcery* (C. C. Thomas, 1974).

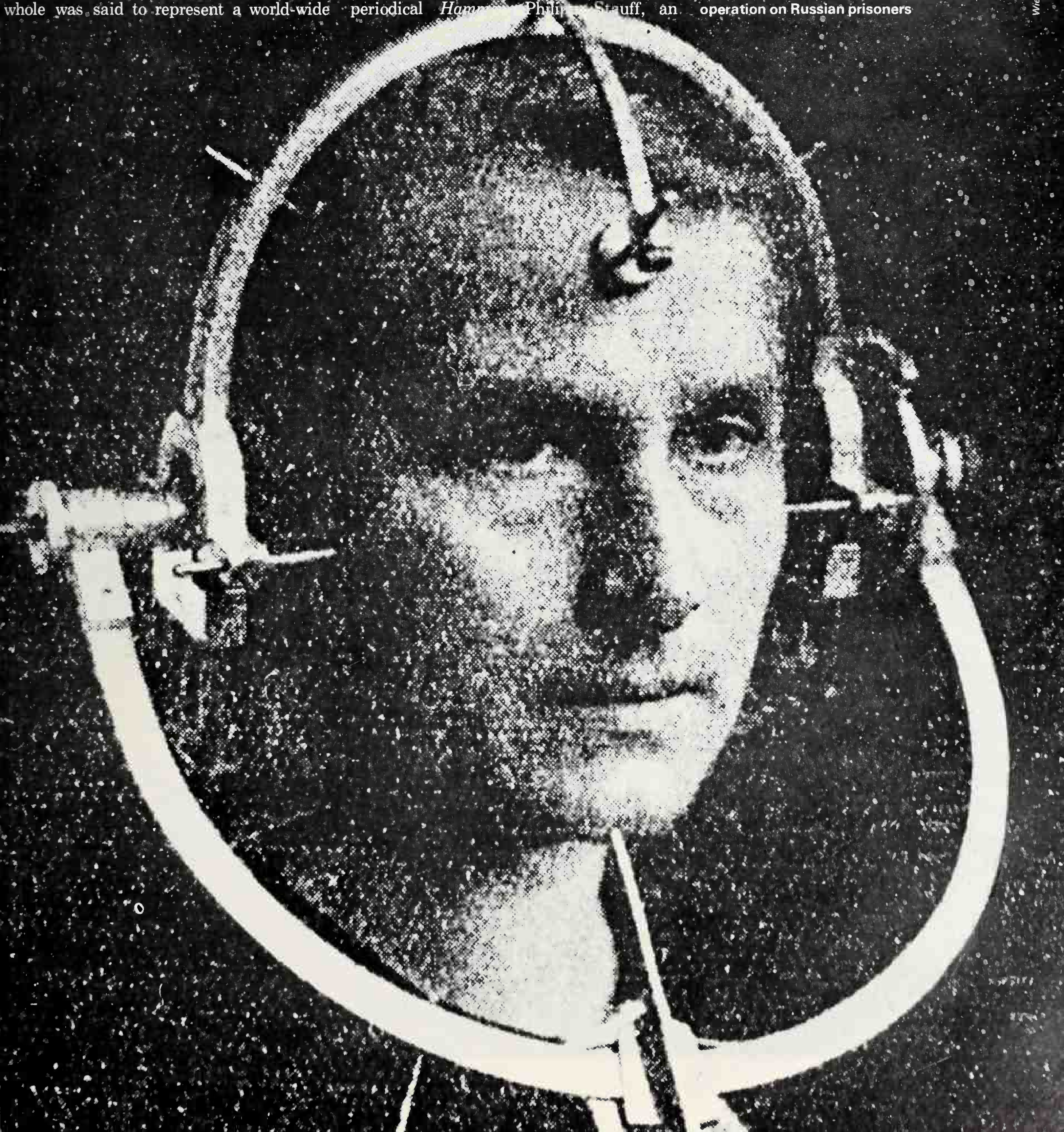
GERMANEN ORDER

THE CHIEF SIGNIFICANCE today of the Germanen Order, which flourished from 1912 to about 1922, lies in the fact that some of its members had connections with the early National Socialist Movement, and that it cherished so many of the myths that prevailed in extremist German nationalist circles. For instance, there was the delusion that the truly German master race (*Herrenvolk*) was descended from heroic Nordic ancestors who were fair-haired and blue-eyed, representing a racial ideal. Then there was the obsessive belief in the existence of a 'Jewish peril'. Jewry as a whole was said to represent a world-wide conspiratorial movement, and there were many who believed in the existence of a small, secret and immensely powerful international group of Jews who sought to rule the world. Since Freemasonry was supposed to be dominated by Jews, this also represented an international conspiracy.

There were several reasons for the decision to establish the Order on pseudo-masonic lines. Unconsciously, at least, there was the desire to use their opponents' 'magic', in the form of rituals. Also, they supposed that secrecy was essential to prevent the Order being penetrated by Jews.

The founders of the Order were all obsessional antisemites. They included Theodor Fritsch, publisher of the antisemitic periodical *Hammer*, Philipp Stauff, an obscure journalist, Professor Heinrich Kräger and Hermann Pohl, who was probably a renegade Freemason.

Candidates for admission were required to sign an attestation that they had no Jewish blood in their veins and were not married to a Jewess. A photograph was also necessary because the Order's physiognomical experts were confident of their ability to identify Jewish descent at a glance.



Candidates for membership of the Berlin lodge of the Germanen Order had their skulls measured with a 'platometer' to make sure that they conformed to the Order's 'Nordic' racial ideals: 30 years later Heinrich Himmler organized a similar measuring operation on Russian prisoners

Wiener Library

The only known copy of an initiation ritual of the Germanen Order is preserved at the German Federal Archives. While the candidate waits in an adjoining room the Master and his two Knights take their places. They are clad in white robes and wear helmets adorned with Wotan's horns. 'The Master of the Music' sits at the harmonium and the Lodge members enter singing the Pilgrims' Chorus from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. The candidate, who is blindfolded and wears a pilgrim's mantle, is brought into the Lodge room. He listens to a solemn address from the Master and is informed that what separates him from the Hebrews and members of other inferior races is 'our Ario-Germanic concept of the world and life'. The Bard ignites a sacred flame and the bandage is removed from the candidate's eyes. The Master takes Wotan's holy spear and holds it in front of him. His two Knights cross their swords upon it. Meanwhile the Music Master plays extracts from *Lohengrin*.

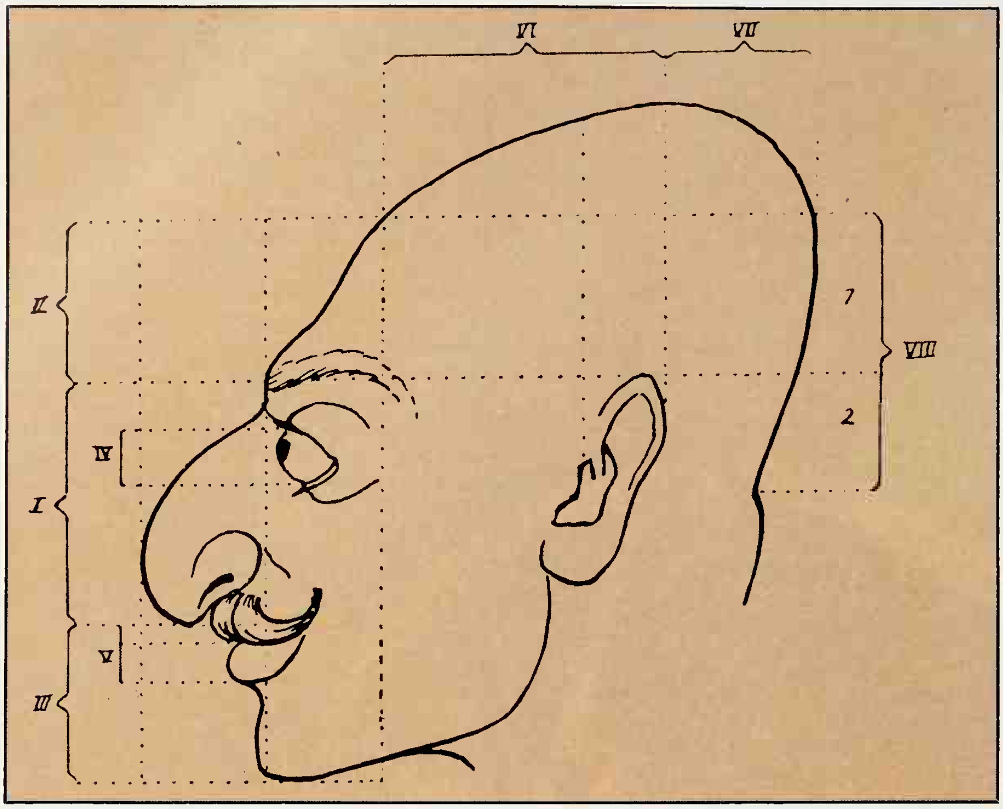
The Order was more or less inactive during the First World War. In 1916 Hermann Pohl made an undignified exit and founded a rival order. The original Germanen Order became active again in 1919; the Grand Duke Johann Albrecht of Mecklenburg, a prototype German nationalist, was Grand Master. In 1920 the three 'secret chiefs' of the Order were General von Heimerdinger, Dr Bernhard Koerner, a cranky member of the former Prussian College of Heralds, and Eberhard von Brockhusen, a Pomeranian landowner. The latter was as much anti-Polish as antisemitic. It is clear from surviving documents that he and Koerner were followers of Guido von List (1848–1919), the Viennese occultist; also that much of the Order's lunatic teaching came from this source (see LIST).

However, while the Order's leaders were conducting their eccentric ceremonies, links were being made with such right-wing conspiratorial groups as the notorious Organization Consul.

At Munich early in 1919 members of Pohl's splinter group, led by Baron Rudolph von Sebottendorff, were deeply involved in the right-wing opposition to the short-lived Communist regime. Some of Sebottendorff's people had close links with the German Workers' Party, which Hitler joined in September 1919 and speedily transformed into the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Hitler was never a member of the Germanen Order and had no use for it. Indeed, when he came to power previous membership of the Order precluded an individual from attaining any rank in the National Socialist Party.

After 1922, the history of the Order is obscure. It is possible that it was obliged to dissolve or go underground.

ELLIC HOWE



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Ullstein

Above A non-Nordic face, drawn by Burger-Villingen, inventor of the platometer. The Germanen Order's founders, who were violently antisemitic, shared the 'master race' delusion that later influenced the Nazis. Johann Albrecht, Grand Duke of Mecklenburg *(below)* was at one time Grand Master of the Order

The slaughter of prisoners of war and the deliberate damage of the spoils of battle – evidence of which has been found in the peat bogs of Denmark and north Germany – was part of the tribute which Germanic tribes paid to their gods in return for victory

GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY

THE STUDY of Germanic mythology is complicated by the shortage of contemporary records and the extent to which the Germanic people are spread over northern Europe. We first hear of tribes of German-speaking peoples sharing the same general religious beliefs in about the 4th century BC, when they were established in the south of the Scandinavian peninsula, the islands of the Baltic and the land between the Rhine and the River Vistula. Subsequently they spread further into Scandinavia, while the tribes of the Angles and Saxons migrated from Germany into Great Britain from the 5th century AD onwards. Thus scattered, the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon branches tended to develop their religious beliefs along distinctive lines.

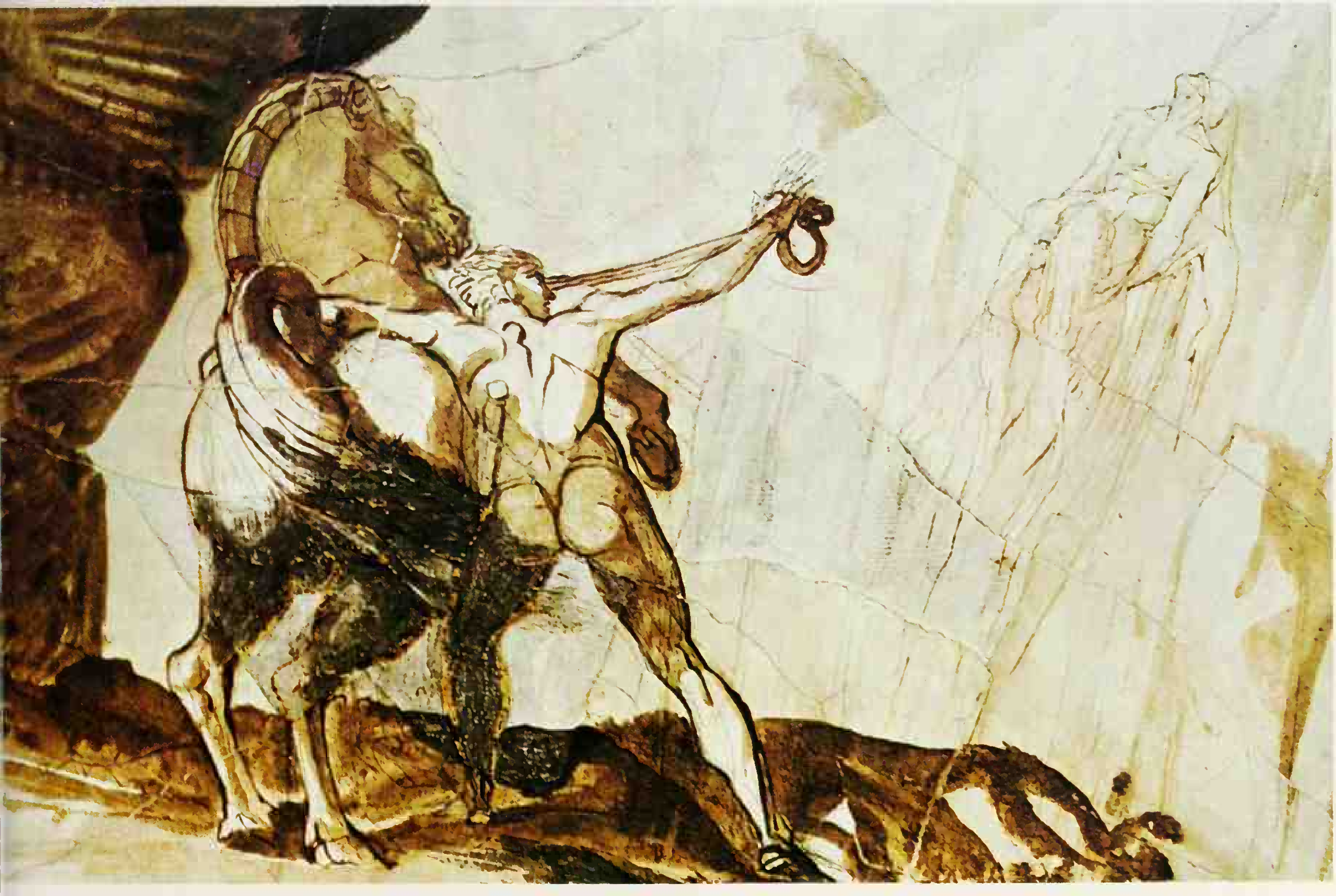
The greater part of present-day evidence for the early beliefs of the Germanic peoples was written down long after their conversion to Christianity, and therefore needs to be treated with caution. Germany and Anglo-Saxon England were converted by about the 7th century AD. The conversion of Norway, Denmark and Iceland, however, did not take place until about the 10th century, and that of Sweden later still, so that Scandinavian literature provides us with much of our information about the heathen gods in their later, Scandinavian forms. The Icelanders in particular retained a great interest in their heathen past, and mythological poems and stories of heathen times were written down in their monasteries along with conventional Christian works.

The pagan Germanic tribes left no written material, apart from their brief inscriptions in runic letters on stone, bone or metal, since only with the coming of Christianity did they learn to read and write Latin letters and make books on parchment. Runic inscriptions are notoriously difficult to interpret, but sometimes give valuable information about the worship of the gods or the practice of magic. Contemporary written accounts come mostly from Greek or Roman historians, of varying reliability. We depend considerably on the *Germania* of Tacitus, which was written at the end of the 1st century AD.

Place names can tell much about the distribution and importance of the various cults, while the titles given to Germanic deities in Roman times, proper names, and names of the days of the week also offer valuable clues about the heathen gods. One invaluable source is archeology: cult images, ritual objects, burial customs and holy places may be revealed by archeological discovery, and in this way it is possible to check the reliability of literary evidence.

Remains from the Scandinavian Bronze Age, a period dating roughly from 1400 to 600 BC, provide the earliest evidence of mythology in northern Europe. Extensive carvings on the rocks of Sweden, Denmark and Norway of scenes which appear to be associated with religious ritual, together with tiny bronze figurines and ritual objects recovered from the peat bogs, enable us to reconstruct something of the cult of the Earth Goddess, continuing from the Neolithic period (in northern Europe about 2000–1400 BC). In the late Bronze Age, about 600 BC, she seems to be pictured as a woman with bare breasts, wearing a neck ring and a short skirt and with her hair in a plait; these characteristics probably explain the offerings of plaits of hair and neck rings recovered from the Danish peat bogs. There is evidence also for belief in a male god of the sky. Male figures have been found holding axes and wearing horned helmets, and also a gigantic figure brandishing a spear. It is difficult to know whether these figures represent independent deities, one primarily connected with the sky and the seasons and the other with battle, but what is known of other early religions suggests

'Odin calls to the prophetess on the edge of Hell' by Fuseli. Odin was the Scandinavian equivalent of the Germanic Wodan, lord of the dead and the god of magic, poetic inspiration and frenzied rage. He went to Hel, the country of the dead, and called up a prophetess from the grave to learn the secret of the fate of the god Balder



Michael Holford

that they may be different aspects of the high god who ruled the heavens and the journeying sun, controlled the seasons of the year, and also led his followers in war. Certainly the axe and the spear were of great importance in the Bronze Age as symbols of divine power.

There is also evidence of twin deities, a divine male pair who are mirror images of one another. Horned animals like the stag, as well as the bull, the horse, the boar, the bird and the serpent, are already important religious symbols at this period. There is some evidence for the ritual sacrifice of such creatures, and also of their association with the deities of earth and sky.

Supreme God of the Sky

In the Iron Age (from 600 BC onwards) we find the earliest evidence for a specifically Germanic religion. There are again indications of the worship of a supreme god of the sky, whose name is thought to have been Tiwaz. This was the god whom the Anglo-Saxons in the 5th and 6th centuries worshipped as Tiw in England, while he was remembered in Scandinavia as Tyr. The third day of the week, Tuesday, was called after him throughout the Germanic world. The name Tiwaz is related to the Greek Zeus and to an earlier form of the Roman name for Jupiter, and these names are all thought to be derived from the Indo-Germanic word for god, probably associated with the light of the shining heavens. The Anglo-Saxon Tiw is remembered in a number of place names, including Tuesley in Surrey, Tewin in Hertfordshire and Tysoe in Warwickshire.

Only one major myth about Tyr survives in Scandinavian legend, but this is an important one. It is the story of how he alone was able to bind the Fenris wolf, a monster which threatened the safety of the gods. As the wolf grew huger and fiercer, none but Tyr dared come near him, and the creature broke all chains and fetters laid upon him. Finally a magic chain was wrought by the dwarfs, which looked like a silken cord but was impossible to break. The wolf was suspicious of it, but finally agreed to have it round his neck if Tyr would place his right hand between the wolf's jaws as a pledge against treachery. The wolf found that all his giant strength could not break this leash, and in his fury he bit off the god's hand, so that Tyr remains one-handed. This connection between Tyr and the power to bind is an important one in northern symbolism.

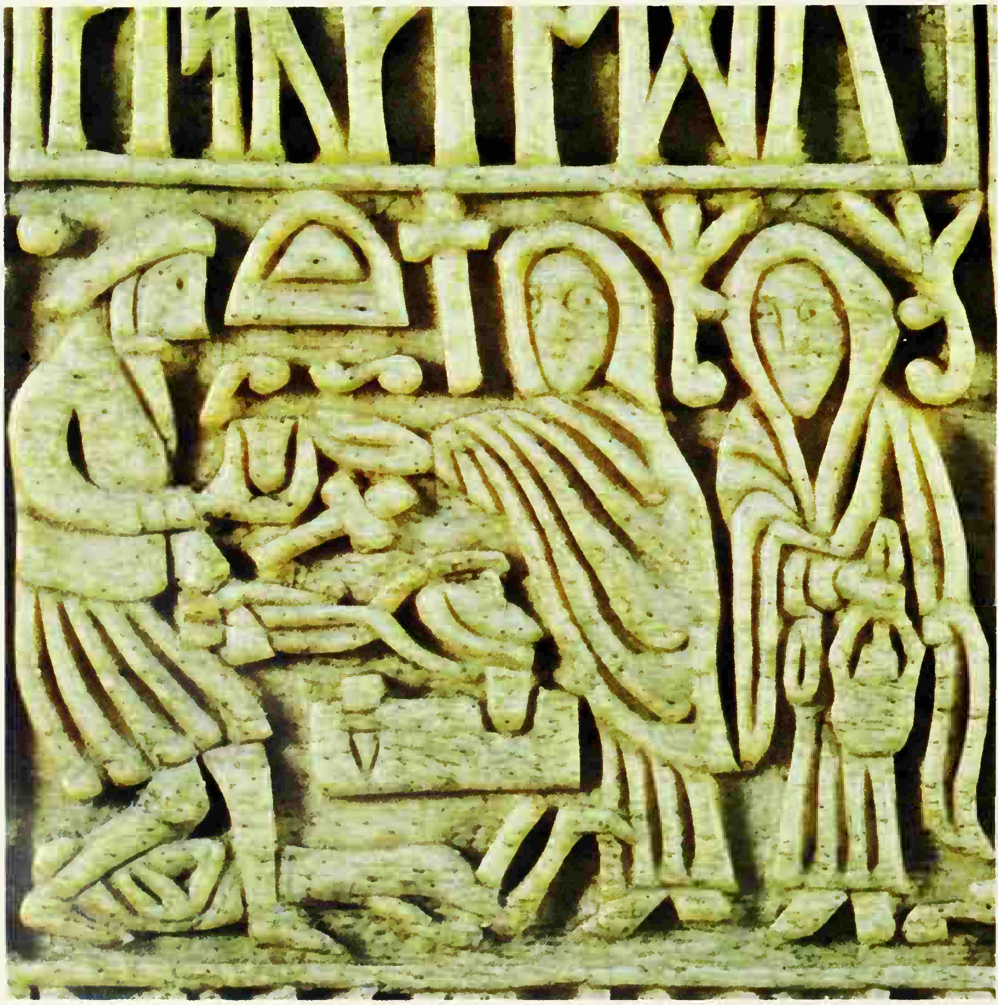
It is possible that one of the most mysterious accounts of the worship of a Germanic deity in the Roman period, described by the Roman historian Tacitus, also refers to Tiwaz. We are told that the Semnones, a tribe living between the Rhine and the Oder, worshipped a god called God and Ruler of All. They met with other tribes yearly near a sacred wood, held in great awe as a holy place, and anyone who entered this wood had to be bound with a cord as a symbol of humility. He might not get to his feet again if he stumbled but must roll over the ground. It is not clear from this account whether this was a divination ritual, or a sacrificial ritual to determine a victim, or both, but the connection with binding is important.

Tiwaz was equated by the Romans with the god Mars, also a god of the third day of the week, and so must have been seen by them primarily as a god of battle. One of his titles however was Mars Thingsus, which associates him with the *Thing*, the local assembly where free men met to deliberate together. This aspect of Tiwaz was taken over by Thor in the Viking Age.

The swearing of oaths on weapons and the sacrifice of weapons in thanksgiving for victory are both known to have been part of the cult of the Germanic gods. Tacitus states that the Germans sacrificed for victory to Mars and Mercury, that is, to Tiwaz and Wodan (or Wotan). One form which this took was the slaying of captives taken in war, and there is also archeological evidence for the plunder won in battle being deliberately damaged and then thrown into pools or left lying in heaps on the ground. Such offerings have been recovered from the peat bogs of Denmark and North Germany, and the great finds like those of Vimose and Nydam have added considerably to our knowledge of Germanic weapons and craftsmanship from the 2nd to the 6th century AD, as well as emphasizing the religious awe and stern discipline which demanded such costly sacrifices. Tacitus records that the Hermundari and the Chatti both vowed to sacrifice everything which they won in return for victory, and that the Hermundari, who were successful, carried out their vow.

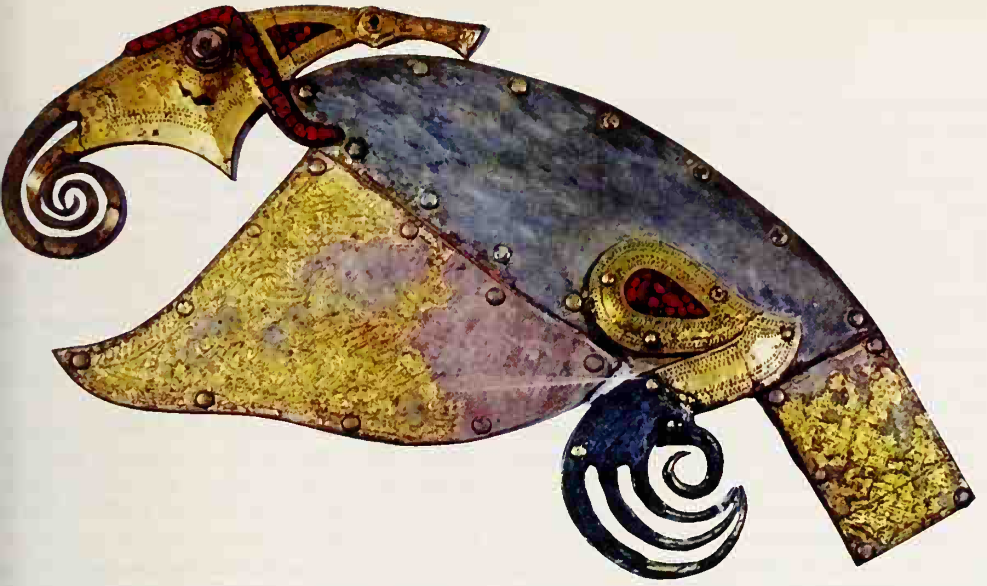
Ruler of the Dead

Such practices began in Roman times, and may be due to the increasing influence of the cult of the god Wodan among the Germanic peoples. It had become customary a little earlier, in the Celtic Iron Age in Denmark, to bury weapons in the graves of the wealthy dead, and to leave in their graves dishes of roasted meat, with cups, jugs and horns of wine and mead, the equipment for a feast. Since in the Viking Age both weapons and feasting were consistently associated with the kingdom of Odin in the other world, such practices may indicate the spread of the cult of his predecessor Wodan among the Germans. Wodan was the god who ruled the land of the dead and was also associated with inspiration and magic. He was a god of cruel sacrifices, and his human and animal victims are said to have



Michael Holford/British Museum

Detail from the ivory decoration of an 8th-century Northumbrian casket now in the British Museum, portraying the revenge of Wayland the Smith on King Nithhad. Wayland was the English form of Wieland, the Teutonic equivalent of Vulcan, and in Anglo-Saxon tradition he was taken prisoner by Nithhad and forced to work for him. One day the king's sons came to his smithy and he cut off their heads; and when the king's daughter brought a ring (his wife's, stolen from him) for repair, he raped her. The body of one of the sons lies beneath the anvil; Wayland's brother Eigil killed birds to make the feather cloak used by the Smith in his subsequent escape



Michael Holford

The eagle was the bird of Wodan, probably partly in imitation of the Roman eagle of Jupiter. Small eagle brooches and figures of eagles on shields, like this one from Sutton Hoo, were used by the Germans as amulets to ward off danger

been suspended from trees. References to such sacrifices come from Greek and Roman writers and are in general corroborated by what we know of the worship of the god Odin in later times in Sweden.

Another aspect of Wodan may be represented by traditions of the Wild Hunt, a host passing through the sky on stormy nights. The riders were on black horses and were followed by wolflike hounds, which could be heard baying in the air, and in some parts of Sweden, Denmark and Germany the leader was said to be the god Odin or a spirit called Wode. Since Wodan was a wandering, restless god, the leader of spirits of the dead, who was associated with the horse and the wolf, this may well be a genuine pagan tradition going back to pre-Christian times.

Wodan's name is probably connected with the Gothic *wut*, which signifies fury or extreme mental excitement. The name Odin (Othinn) in Old Norse appears to have had a similar basis, coming from an adjective applied to a violent storm or fire but also used for poetic genius or furious rage. Odin was the god of magic, inspiration, ecstasy and intoxication, and the Germanic Wodan and Anglo-Saxon Woden may be assumed to have had the same general character.

Odin, as god of battle, was followed by his Valkyries, the battle spirits who went out to choose the slain, sometimes described as dignified women on horseback and sometimes as bloodthirsty creatures revelling in slaughter. Such battle spirits were known earlier to the Germanic people, and female spirits called the Alaisiagae, with various symbolic names associated with battle, are mentioned along with Mars on stones at Housesteads on Hadrian's Wall.

A Grim Pun

The raven and wolf, creatures of the battlefield, are also closely linked with Odin. These are the vultures of the north, feeding on corpses of men and beasts, and as such would seem to belong to the sinister cult of the dark power Wodan rather than to Tiwaz, the god of the sky. They were not viewed solely as scavengers, since Odin was attended constantly by two ravens which flew round the world to bring him tidings and came to tell them in his ears. The symbol of a figure or a human head between two birds, which seem to be pecking it from either side, was known both to the Germans and the Celts. It might be seen as a grim pun in the German heroic style, representing the birds which peck at the corpse and the hanged man, and at the same time serve as the messengers bringing tidings to the god of death.

The eagle also was a symbol of the god, partly imitated no doubt from the Roman eagle which stood for the divine Emperor and which was carried by Roman armies. Small eagle brooches and fine eagle figures on shields, like those on the great ceremonial shield from Sutton Hoo, were used by the Germans as protective amulets. Another widespread symbol of the god was the spear, which in Norse literature is called Gungnir; one of the great treasures of the gods, it was flung over the host which Odin had doomed to defeat. The spear was an important symbol in the Bronze Age, and may have been originally the weapon of Tiwaz as god of battle. Little silhouettes in bronze, dating from the 6th and 7th centuries, of a warrior riding a horse and carrying a spear – often a weapon of exaggerated size – are found widely distributed over the Germanic continental area.

The Axe and the Oak

While there is a considerable amount of evidence for the cult of Wodan among the Germanic peoples, there is far less for that of the third of the main deities whom they worshipped, the god Donar (Thunor to the Anglo-Saxons), whose name connects him with thunder and after whom the fifth day of the week, Thursday, was named. Donar was identified by the Romans with both Jupiter and Hercules; the first association was evidently based on the power of the god over the storm and the thunderbolt, while he was linked with Hercules because he was seen as the protector of men against giants and monsters.

Clearly the functions of Donar must have overlapped considerably with those of the sky god Tiwaz, and his cult may have belonged to the tribes who lived in the thickly forested areas of Germany. It was linked with the oak forests of England, and places named after him are found in Saxon rather than Anglian districts. They are often formed from the element *leah*, meaning a forest clearing, like Thunderley and Thundersley in Essex. The name Thunaer is included in an early Saxon renunciation formula as a heathen god to be renounced by the Christian convert. Donar may have been represented by the oak tree or the axe before figures of the gods in human form became known among the Germans owing to Roman influence.

Donar's thunderbolt was symbolized by the axe, a sign of divine power from Neolithic times onwards. At some stage in the north it came to be pictured as a hammer, and tiny hammer-shaped amulets have been found in Anglo-Saxon graves. Prehistoric stone axes and fossil stones known as 'thunder weapons' were treasured in Denmark, Germany and England up to modern times; they were held to protect the house against lightning, fire and other calamities, and they were carried by German soldiers as protection against bullets in the Franco-Prussian war. A case was recorded from northern Germany in this century of a farmer who kept three prehistoric stone axes in the house and laid them in the first holes made by the drill at sowing time, and there is no doubt that the thunder god was associated with the fertility of the earth as well as the control of storms and the well-being of the community.

The deities known in Scandinavia as the Vanir, gods and goddesses connected with fertility, are the hardest to trace in early Germanic mythology. Clearly the worship of the Earth Goddess continued throughout northern Europe from the Neolithic period onwards. In the Viking Age this goddess had many names, of which Freyja is best known, and the sixth day of the week, Friday, was called after her predecessor, Frija, throughout the Germanic world. No convincing evidence of cult places called after her has survived in England, although some of those called 'Friday' may have been associated with the goddess.

German goddesses of bounty are known from Roman times, and stones of this period from England and Germany show two or three seated goddesses with fruit, bread or horns of plenty, or sometimes one figure alone. The sacred place of one of these goddesses, Nehalennia, has been found under the sand on the Island of Walcheren in the Netherlands, and it is clear that travellers appealed to her for a safe crossing over the North Sea.

Evidence for a male god like the Swedish Freyr, Freyja's brother, is harder to find. However, naked phallic male figures in wood and metal, roughly shaped with bearded faces, have been found in Denmark and North Germany, dating from the Roman period. A male and a female figure in wood from Braak in Schleswig-Holstein might well represent twin fertility deities; they are simple but impressive shapes, larger than human, which have by chance been preserved in the peat. Freyja's symbol, the boar, which she shared with the male fertility god, is well represented in Anglo-Saxon England.

Twin Gods

Tacitus mentions twin gods called the Alcis who were worshipped along the North Sea coasts in the 1st century AD. They could have developed from the twin deities of the Bronze Age, and would correspond with the protective brothers known to the Greeks as the Dioscuri, the sons of the sky god. There are what might be twin gods on the gold horn from Gallehus, dated about AD 500, and twin dancing figures on helmets of the 6th century. There is little sign of such twin figures in the literature of the period except for pairs of brother kings in early Swedish tradition, and the Anglo-Saxon pair Hengest and Horsa, whose names mean Stallion and Horse, and who are said to have led an invasion of England in the 5th century; the Dioscuri were consistently associated with horses.

Other myths concerning the gods and their world may be dimly glimpsed in Germanic tradition. The myth of the creation of the world from the body of a giant may have been associated with Tuisto, who according to Tacitus was the father of Mannus, the ancestor of the German race; he would be equivalent to Ymir in Norse mythology. A belief in the ultimate destruction of the world, an important element of Norse mythology, was probably also known to the pagan Germans.

There are indeed many isolated clues to the lost mythology of the Germanic peoples in the pagan period, and the study of their rich symbolism, constantly coming to light in fresh finds of decorated cremation urns and brooches and weapons of the Roman and later periods, will doubtless help us in due course to integrate these, and to gain a fuller knowledge of early religion among the Germanic tribes.

(See also SCANDINAVIA; and articles on individual deities.)

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

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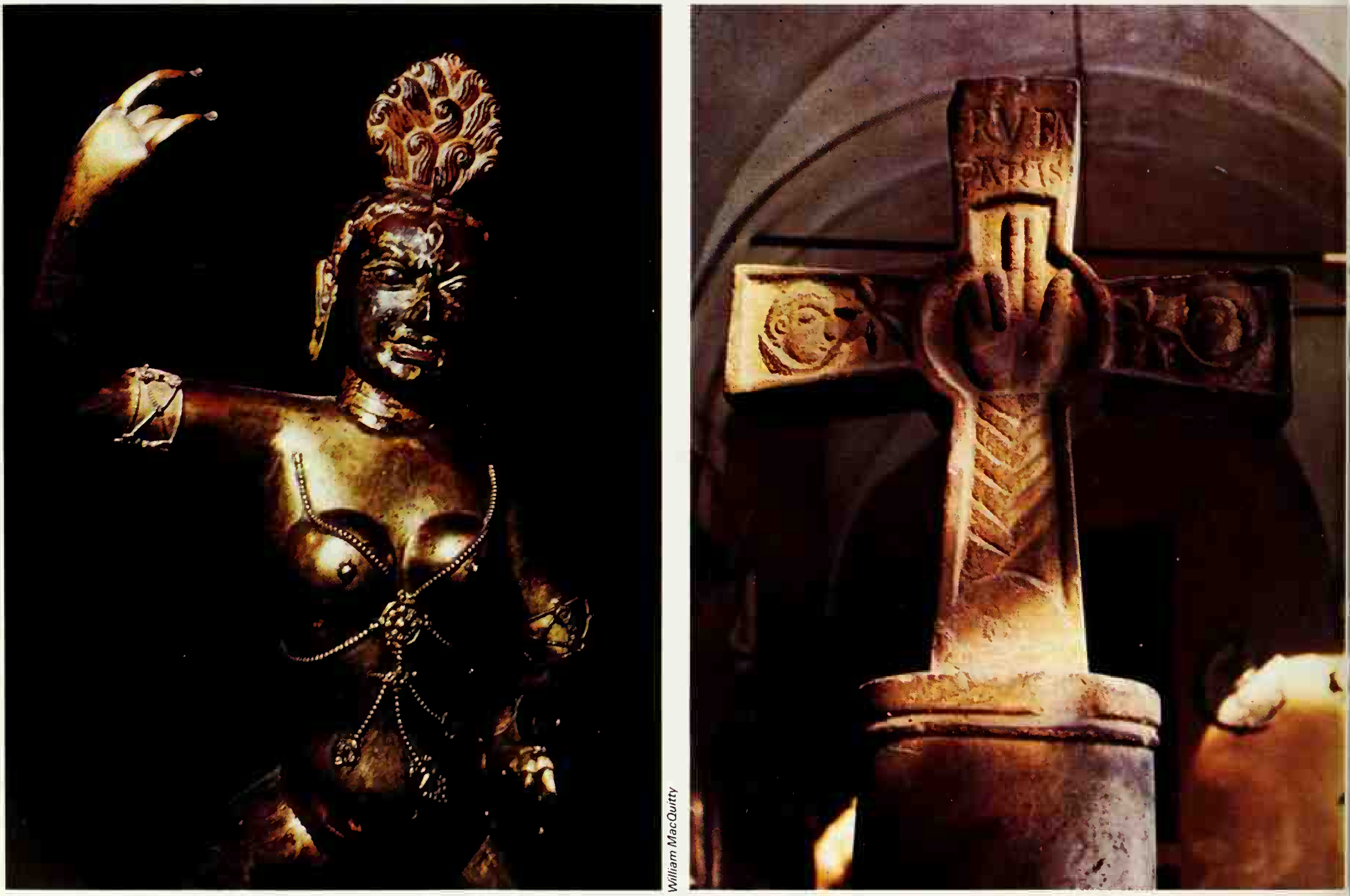

William MacQuitty

Left **Bronze statuette of an Indian female deity, 'waging war against the enemies of religion'; her gesture shows disapproval of the forces of evil *Right* Early Christian roadside cross from Ravenna in Italy. The thumb and two fingers pointing upwards represent the Trinity. The same gesture is used by the Pope in blessing the faithful**

Certain gestures are found to recur in widely different times and cultures, for the language of hand and body is international. In a few countries, however, like India and Bali, ritual gesture has developed into a complex and distinctive art form

GESTURE

TO CONVEY MEANING without words, attitudes of the body and especially movements of arms and hands are employed. The effect is to give a dramatic charge to meaning by acting it out in a universal sign language, for good gestures, except for certain specialist ones, are immediately comprehensible.

In fact everyone without realizing it knows a great many ritual gestures. There is the Fascist salute of the open hand flung up, which was taken from the ancient Roman salute; it showed that a man held no weapon and therefore came in peace. The corresponding Communist clenched fist implies determination and even a threat, and seems to say: 'But I do have a weapon!' In medieval religious art God is shown with open hand, and rays are often represented coming from his fingers. The open hand was a sign of victory in Phoenicia, and the Roman legions used it in a similar sense, putting it at the tops of their standards as shown on Trajan's column in Rome.

Fingers are crossed 'for luck'. The original intention was the ceremonial stoppage of evil influences, and legs or arms were crossed for the same reason. Three fingers closed, leaving the thumb and little finger erect, gives the sign of the Horned God or 'Devil'. This sign has a long history: called the *mano cornuta* in Italy, it was earlier a general sign for the moon goddess, and used in the cults both of Dagon in the Near East and of Brahma in India. The hand turned sideways, with first and little fingers only extended, is popularly supposed to avert the Evil Eye and is in wide use in Italy and the Near East.

The Devil has much to do with luck, and lucky charms are often sold showing the Devil with his fingers to his nose, in vulgar parlance 'cocking a snook'. The gesture appears to be sexual in origin, nose and thumb being reckoned as phallic symbols.

The most famous popular gesture of recent years, the V for Victory sign popularized by Sir Winston Churchill, seems to be a horns-up sign, implying the power of a horned animal. Another version of this gesture is the old sign of Tudor and earlier times 'Horns to you,' used for telling someone that his wife is being unfaithful. This hoary jest, which never failed to amuse on the Elizabethan stage however often it appeared, was based on the idea that the wronged husband was supposed to be sprouting horns on his brow.

The thumb appearing between the first and second fingers is the common Italian gesture *fica*, 'I don't care a fig,' called *manus obscaena* in late Roman times. It showed contempt to the highest degree. But the thumb has a more noble significance: extended, in Christian baptism it is used for making the sign of the cross in water on children, following the Old Testament custom of using the thumb to apply blood in the ritual of ordination (Leviticus 8, 23-4; Exodus 29.20). Thumbs up or down was the sign whereby the Roman Emperor signified life or death to the defeated one in the gladiatorial shows of the ancient world.

Gestures of the Catholic Mass

A Catholic priest celebrating the Mass makes use of gesture to indicate to the congregation the stage of the service which is about to be reached. For the most part, these gestures arise naturally from the course of the action. When the priest is offering up prayer on behalf of the people, he holds his hands open and upward and facing towards the altar. Facing away from the altar, the priest raises one open hand to bless the congregation.

The Pope, and later a bishop as well, would bless instead with the third and little fingers closed on the palm of the hand, so that the thumb, first and second fingers were left to represent the Trinity. This is the ancient *mano pantea* represented at Pompeii, and is a gesture also well known in India.

To express penitence, the right hand, bent inwards, is used to strike the breast. A rather more distinctive gesture is that commonly employed while holding the Host. The priest holds his hands together with the thumbs parallel and the first fingers bent so that their tips are joined upon the tips of the thumbs ; the Host is held between these four tips, while the three other fingers are extended, but touching at the tips.

Christianity and Islam both make use of the gesture of joining the thumb and first finger in a rough circle, leaving the other three fingers fully extended. The Greek Orthodox Church used this gesture in blessing, and it is with his hands in this position that the Moslem recites his creed. A certain threat is implied if the hand is held horizontally; but when it is elevated it signifies love.

The common ritual gestures of the Buddha are in effect four. The seated Buddha calls the earth to witness with the downward-pointing right hand, while he receives from above with the upward-turned left hand laid in his lap. When the Buddha's hands are together they are seen as holding the begging bowl.

When one hand is held up, palm outward, this is known as 'turning the wheel of the law', as this is the gesture that would be used in spinning a real wheel. It is the general 'teaching' position, and is also used when the Buddha is in the standing position with the staff of pilgrimage. The other seated position is that of meditation, with the hands folded simply on the lap. The reclining Buddha has one hand upturned, receiving guidance from above during repose; the other arm supports the head, the eyes being closed.

The Movements of Magic

Ceremonial magic naturally employs many gestures. In one of the more intelligible the arms are outstretched to form a cross with the body, expressing suffering and death, applied in Egyptian magic usually to Osiris; this action also occurs in the Christian Mass. In another gesture the forearms may be held up in a St Andrew's cross, making the pentagram and signifying a rising from the dead. The gesture of the Egyptian god Shu, supporting the heavens with uplifted hands, also occurs in the Mass as a gesture of offering thanks and prayer.

Magical gestures can be traced back to Neolithic and even to Paleolithic times. At St Duzac, Brittany, is a menhir (ancient monumental stone), one of whose carvings shows a god with arms held up supporting a goddess. This bell-skirted lady has her arms crossed, but her hands are held up in a gesture that may mean the union of true hearts or possibly signifies the stopping of birth. At the top is a pre-Christian figure with the arms extended upon an equal-armed cross.

The ceremonial gestures of ancient Egypt may be deduced from pyramid and tomb reliefs and paintings. In funeral ceremonies the first thought was perhaps to raise the soul. This idea is expressed by holding the hands palms upwards, above the head. Actual mourning was a matter of holding the arms in a gesture of throwing dust upon the head, and uttering the cries of the professional mourner. Intercession with the gods for the dead is shown by the arms held directly upward. To send away the threatening evil spirits from the dead a pushing movement was made.

The ceremony of making offerings to the gods involved specific gestures such as the picking up of the offering and making the offering in the sign of the lotus, which was the most usual flower to be offered; the double lotus is a much fuller and more striking gesture than the single one.

Some of the most striking examples of the use of ritual gesture appear in dance forms. Of the fully developed systems the greatest are those of India and Bali.

Language of Signs

Of great antiquity, the Hindu dance is generally considered to be based on the 108 poses carved in the Gopurams (terrace passages) of the temple of Shiva Nataraja – (Shiva as lord of the dance) at Cidambaram in southern India. The Hindi word *Natya* means both acting and dancing; that is, gesture with meaning is recognized as an essential part of the dance. Thus there are 108 standard *mudras* or hand gestures in the classical Hindu sacred dance, single or double-handed – the most complete gesture language in the world.

The meaning is essentially mythological; its elements came, it is said, from the basic four sacred books of the *Vedas*. The main centre of action and movement is in the upper body rather than the legs. Poses are prescribed for features and head: there are 52 types of glances, 13 positions for the mouth and 20 for the head and neck. There are also numerous prescribed postures for the hands.

Perhaps the most significant and easily recognized positionings are those that portray a god, of which there are some 16. Five positions represent various manifestations of Shiva: the three-eyed god, the cobra-crowned one, he who wears the moon in his tresses, he who rides the bull, and the Creator of earth and heaven. The monkey god Hanuman has two earthly hands pointing down. The popular Krishna and his milk-girl mate Radha are shown by five gestures. A goddess in general has a mudra of protection – hand up – and of bestowal – hand down; the particular goddess is shown by attaching to the general mudra the gesture depicting her mate.

The more general gestures, like this one, often have several meanings according to context. Of these, the *pataka* means Brahma, victory or grace, and is shown by an open hand held up as a blessing. It shows awareness of the god or gods and, when pointed downwards, awareness of the lower worlds. Two hands joined together, palm to palm, and accompanied by a bow, is the usual Indian polite greeting, called *angali*; the hands thus held over the head are used in salutation to deities. When the palms are a little separated they form a gentler gesture to address the elderly.

The palm in Indian dance symbolizes the calm centre of action – the meditative control over the five senses or fingers agitated around it. To show the palm as the most important part-of the hand is basic to the Indian dance.

The dances of Bali are also highly developed, including mythological acting partly derived from India, the miming of beasts and birds, the use of masks, and trance possession. The wealth of gesture defies representative selection, while the costuming, especially the head-dresses, would of itself constitute a major study. (See also DANCE; FINGERS.)

ROSS NICHOLS

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Sometimes called 'the greatest Moslem after Mohammed', Ghazali combined theological orthodoxy with mysticism, and scholarship with a profound understanding of the human soul

GHAZALI

KNOWN TO WESTERN EUROPE in the Middle Ages as Algazel, Abu Hamid Mohammed ibn Mohammed at-Tusi al-Ghazali, mystic, theologian and jurist, was born in 1058 at Tus near Meshed not far from what is now the north-east frontier of Iran. His mother tongue was Persian, but he and his brother Ahmad were taught to master Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, at a very early age.

Abu Hamid Ghazali had a far-reaching education in the various branches of Islamic learning, at Tus, Jorjan and finally at Nishapur, where at the age of 19 he became a pupil of the theologian Juwayni for whom the Vizier Nizam al-Mulk had specially founded a school. Here Ghazali remained for about eight years, completing his education in theology and law, and even at that early age his teacher described him as a 'bountiful ocean' of learning. From others, both at Tus and Nishapur, he received instruction in Islamic mysticism, that is, Sufism.

It was not long before he attracted the attention of the Vizier himself, who sent him in 1091, at the age of 33, to be professor at the famous Nizamiyya school which he had founded in Baghdad. Here Ghazali lectured for four years, mainly on theology and law, and was considered among the most eminent men of the capital.

After four years of brilliant success in Baghdad, Ghazali went through a brief period of scepticism from which he was saved, to use his own words 'by a light which God threw into my breast'. As a result he became keenly aware of the futility of the life he was leading as compared with a hermit's life of contemplation. But at first he could not bring himself to break away. He tells us that for six months in 1095 he was torn between the attractions of his life in Baghdad and 'the claims of the hereafter', and that finally providence intervened by afflicting him with a temporary impediment in his speech which made it impossible for him to lecture. This decided him. But he knew that if his plans were suspected, his friends would do everything in their power to stop him from giving up his work, and the Caliph himself might intervene.

He therefore let it be understood that he was going on the pilgrimage to Mecca and would shortly be back. In fact he went to Damascus, where he spent two years, more or less in solitude, for the purpose of meditation. From there he went on to Jerusalem, and from there he did make the pilgrimage, after which his family persuaded him to return to his native Tus where he continued to live as far as possible in retirement. It was here that he wrote his most famous work – one of the most frequently consulted treatises in all Islamic literature – *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, the aim of which is to restore spiritual significance to every aspect of Islamic life.

In 1105, ten years after the momentous change in his life, great pressure was put upon him to take up teaching again, this time at the Nizamiyya of Nishapur where he himself had received most of his education. He agreed to do so partly because he knew that such outward activity would no longer have any power to disturb his inner life – 'though I went back, yet I did not go back' – and partly because some of his Sufi friends persuaded him that it was his destiny to be the 'renewer of the religion' that the Prophet had promised for the end of every century; and few indeed are those Moslems who would deny that Ghazali had that function for the fifth Islamic century. Before his death in 1111 he had again returned to Tus, where he had Sufi disciples and a hermitage.

Breadth of Vision

It has been said that Ghazali was the greatest Moslem after Mohammed. If this is an exaggeration, the fact that the remark could be made at all is highly significant, pointing as it does to a rare combination of qualities seldom to be found below the rank of prophethood. Ghazali was remarkable for the wide scope of his comprehension with regard not only to the different branches of learning but also with regard to the souls of men. He was truly great because his extreme versatility was knit together by single-mindedness, and his tolerance was tempered by an implacable firmness when he felt that anything of real importance was at stake. If mysticism may be called the heart of religion, it was his function to enable the heart's blood to flow freely through the body, that is, the Islamic community, to its most outlying parts. This was the aim not only of his *Revival* but also of *The Saviour from Error*, his autobiographical treatise in which he affirms that Sufism is the highest way of life and the only sure antidote to scepticism.

But not withstanding his unqualified praise of Sufism, Ghazali knew that it is not merely useless but dangerous to offer men more than they can assimilate. Nor was he ignorant of the spiritual limitations of the majority of his contemporaries, and of the existence of many different spiritual levels. He addressed now one level, now another, speaking the language of each so well that his enemies sometimes accused him of duplicity. But although, like the philosophers of his day, he could make a wide distinction between the intellectual elite and the rest of the community, he was acutely conscious of the interpenetration between the different levels.

His insistence on the universal importance of observing outward forms is typical. An intellectual may know that the act of taking off his sandals before entering on the pilgrimage to Mecca symbolizes ultimately stripping himself of 'the two worlds' (heaven and earth), but his higher knowledge does not exempt him from actually taking off his sandals. 'One must pass to and fro,' he says, 'from the one to the other, from outward word (or act) to inward secret.'

Ghazali is generally classed as a 'moderate mystic' but this can be misleading. It must be remembered that in those works which he wrote especially for Sufis, such as *The Niche of Lights*, he was altogether uncompromising in his formulations, above all as regards the truth that God is the sole reality in the face of which all else is pure illusion; and he is perhaps the only Sufi to have actually used the term 'deification' in defining the end and aim of the mystic path.

(See also SUFIS.)

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Light on the Threshold

'Do you not see,' I reflected, 'that while asleep you assume your dreams to be indisputably real? Once awake, you recognise them for what they are – baseless chimeras. Who can assure you, then, of the reliability of notions which, when awake, you derive from the senses and from reason? In relation to your present state they may be real; but it is possible also that you may enter upon another state of being which will bear the same relation to your present state as this does to your condition when asleep. In that new sphere you will recognise that the conclusions of reason are only chimeras.'

This possible condition is perhaps that which the Sufis call 'ecstasy', that is to say, according to them, a state in which, absorbed in themselves and in the suspension of sense-perceptions, they have visions beyond the reach of intellect. Perhaps also Death is that state . . . Our present life in relation to the future is perhaps only a dream, and man, once dead, will see things in direct opposition to those now before his eyes . . .

Such thoughts as these threatened to shake my reason, and I sought to find an escape from them. But how? In order to disentangle the knot of this difficulty, a proof was necessary. Now a proof must be based on primary assumptions, and it was precisely these of which I was in doubt. This unhappy state lasted about two months, during which I was, not it is true explicitly or by profession, but morally and essentially a thorough-going sceptic.

God at last deigned to heal me of this mental malady; my mind recovered sanity and equilibrium, the primary assumptions of reason recovered with me all their stringency and force. I owed my deliverance, not to a concatenation of proofs and arguments, but to the light which God caused to penetrate into my heart – the light which illuminates the threshold of all knowledge. To suppose that certitude can be only based upon formal arguments is to limit the boundless mercy of God.

C. Field trans *The Confessions of Al Ghazali*

GHOST DANCE

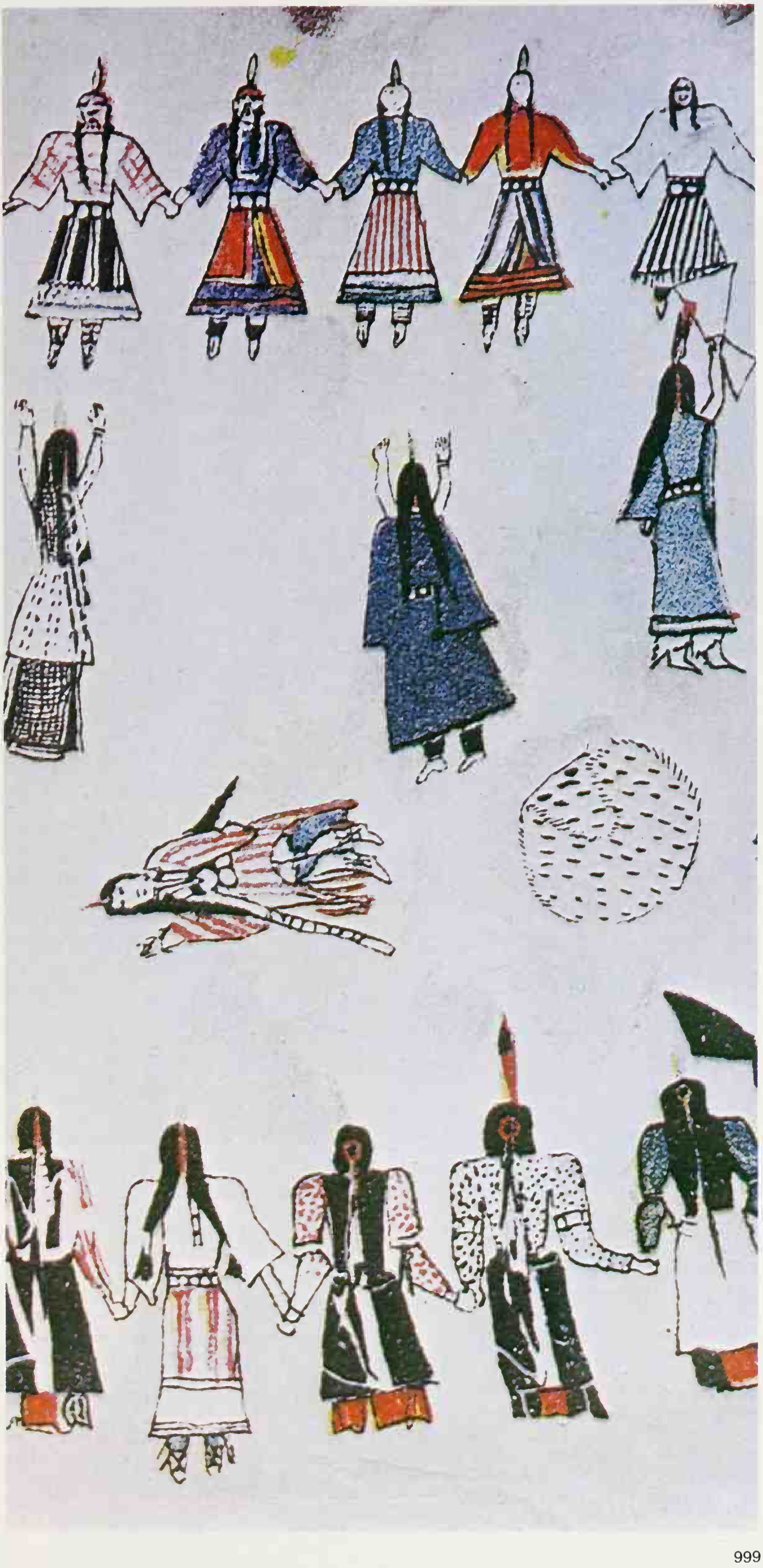
TOWARDS THE END of the 19th century, a new religious movement sprang up among a group of North American Indian tribes. The name 'Ghost Dance' is derived from the term used for it among the Sioux and Arapaho and refers to one of the central doctrines of the movement, the imminent resurrection of the dead. It was first and foremost a messianic movement, but differed from similar movements elsewhere in that it looked towards the restoration of a past golden age rather than to an unknown salvation in the future.

Although it was virtually the last and most desperate attempt by the Indians to escape the effects of the white man's civilization, the Ghost Dance was foreshadowed by a number of similar movements which had flourished and died throughout the 19th century. Among its forerunners were the 'Good Message' movement founded by Handsome Lake among the Iroquois confederation in 1799, that started by Tenskwatawa among the Shawnee and their allies, the Dreamers founded among the Columbia River tribes west of the Rocky Mountains by Smohalla, and the Shakers (not related to the sect of English origin with the same name) founded among the Squaxin tribe in the early 1880s. All these movements had certain features in common. First and foremost, a rejection of the white man and his civilization including alcohol, weapons and technology; secondly, the preaching of brotherly love, honesty and unity among Indians, even between those who had for centuries been tribal enemies; and thirdly, a revival of Indian customs and religious traditions.

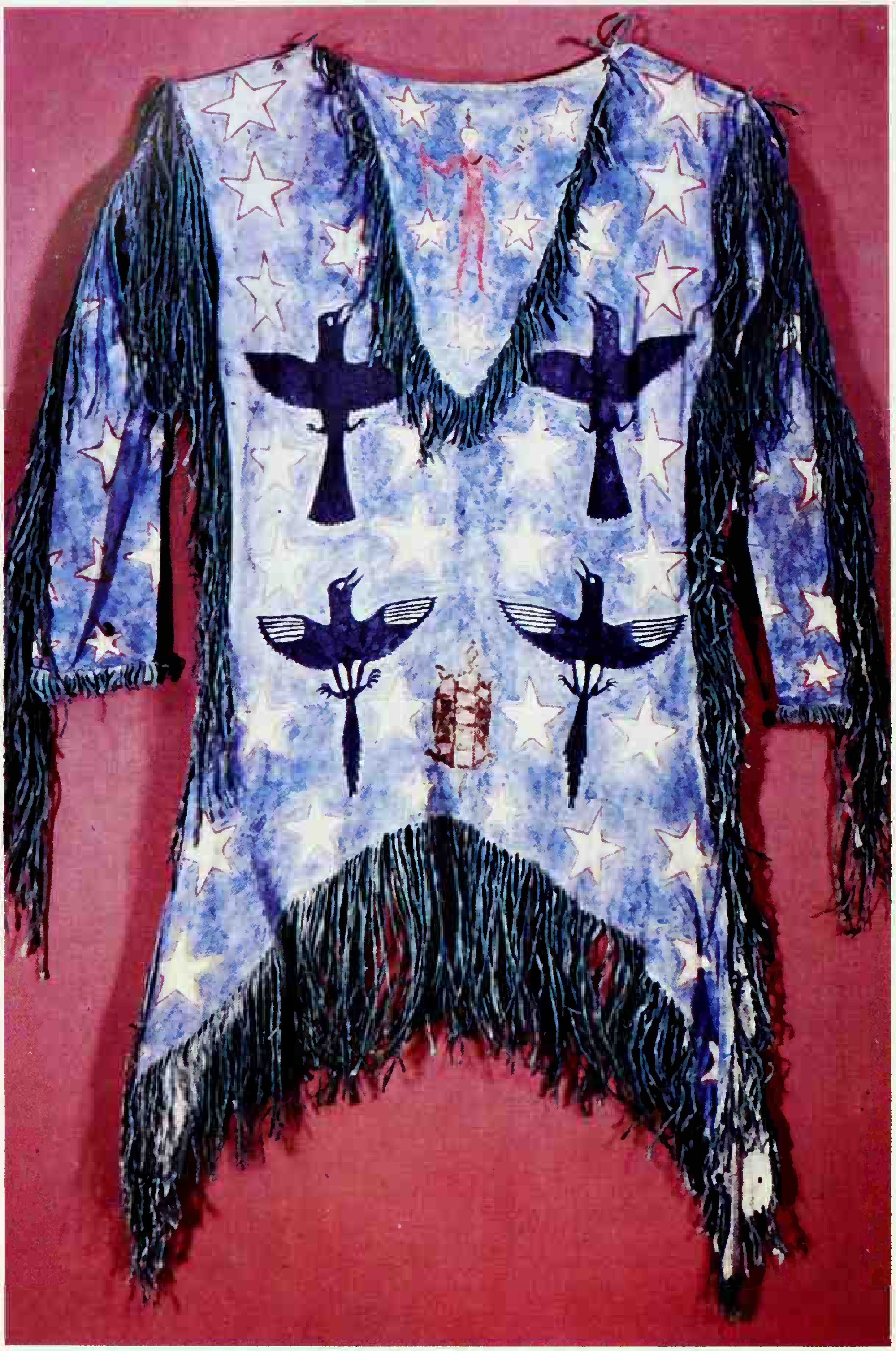
Despair and Nostalgia

To these general beliefs the Ghost Dance movement added at its height specific ingredients of despair and nostalgia that were the inevitable consequence of the reduced position of the Plains tribes. Only recently pacified, their nomadic life replaced by confinement to reservations where they were dependent on the goodwill and beef of the United States government, frequently hungry and unable to adapt to farming, they were largely in a state of sullen apathy in which the medicine-man and the visionary held out the sole hope for the future. Above all, by the end of the 1880s the last of the buffalo herds, the basis of their economy and much of their religious expression, had gone, slaughtered by white hide hunters.

It was not, however, among the warlike Plains tribes that the Ghost Dance originated. Its prophet or messiah was a member of the Paiute tribe, Wovoka (the Cutter). He was born on a reservation in Mason Valley, Nevada in 1856. His father, Tavibo, had been a prophet and leader of a minor Indian revivalist movement in the early



The Ghost Dance, painted on buckskin by a Ute Indian in 1891. The prostrate figures in the centre are in trance. The round object is a blanket, near which a medicine-man is hypnotizing a subject



Museum of American Indian (Heye Foundation)

Ghost Dance shirt of buckskin, painted with a design of birds and stars

1870s and Wovoka was also known as a medicine-man within the shamanistic tradition of his tribe. But it was not until 1886 during an eclipse of the sun, and while he was in a high fever, that he had the experience which was to inspire the Ghost Dance. In his own account he told how, 'When the sun died, I went up to heaven and saw God and all the people who had died a long time ago. God told me to come back and tell my people that they must be good and love one another and not fight or steal or lie. He gave me this dance to give to my people.'

The doctrine preached by Wovoka as a result of his vision embodied these basic beliefs: the white men would disappear from the earth after a general catastrophe from which the Indians would emerge renewed after three days; the buffalo would come back; the Indian dead would return bearing gifts and the old way of life would last for ever. To bring all this about Indians were not only to practise the precepts communicated by God to Wovoka, but were also to renounce alcohol and farming and abandon traditional mourning rites, because the resurrection was near at hand (it was promised for the spring of 1891). And they were to dance the Dance. This consisted of a slow shuffling movement quite unlike other Indian dance steps, in which the participants intertwined fingers and formed a circle or series of concentric circles and moved slowly following the course of the sun. It was to be performed four or five days running and accompanied by singing but no musical instruments. Both men and women were to take part.

The first dance was held on Wovoka's reservation in January 1889. Word of the ceremony spread quickly to other Rocky Mountain tribes, notably the Utes, Bannocks and Shoshone. By the autumn emissaries from the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho had carried back Wovoka's teaching to the Plains reservations. As it travelled, Wovoka's peaceful message of hope became transformed, particularly by the Sioux, who numbered 26,000 and were the largest tribal group in the United States. Although each tribe added different elements from its own ritual traditions, it was the Sioux who added two specific elements not included in the messiah's original teaching. These were the deliberate use of hypnosis to induce trances and communication with the dead, and the 'ghost shirt' made of cloth or buckskin, which was believed to render the wearer immune to bullets.

Massacre at Wounded Knee

Foremost among the Sioux leaders who took up the Ghost Dance with enthusiasm was Sitting Bull, the medicine-man and war leader who had returned a few years previously from Canada, where he had fled after the massacre of General Custer and his troops. It was he who was largely responsible for encouraging trances, although he was reported to have been disappointed by his own failure to achieve a vision. As the Ghost Dance movement spread and increased in fervour towards the spring of the promised resurrection, the military and Indian Agency officials became alarmed. In December 1890, two months after he had presided at his first dance, Sitting Bull was killed by Indian troops while resisting arrest. His followers fled from Standing Rock reservation to the nearby Bad Lands to join the band of Big Foot and Kicking Bear, the medicine-man who had been among Wovoka's first visitors. Rounded up by white and Indian troops at Wounded Knee creek in freezing weather, the warriors resisted arrest, confident that their ghost shirts would protect them. The shirts proved powerless against the two-pound shells of four Hotchkiss guns. Approximately 300 men, women and children were killed.

Although the Ghost Dance continued to be danced among tribes further south, particularly the Kiowa, throughout the 1890s, it came to its real end at Wounded Knee. With it ended the last hopes of the Indians. Many of Wovoka's ideas were absorbed by the peyote cults which flourished in the 1920s and 30s and which still survive today.

Ironically Wovoka, the messiah who had once been identified with Christ, died in total obscurity in 1932, but not before he had allowed himself to be exhibited, during the 1890s, at the Mid-Winter Fair in San Francisco.

(See also NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS; PEYOTE CULTS.)

CHRISTOPHER BUSBY

GHOSTS

Faceless women and lifelike apparitions, ghostly dogs and spectral trains, eerie lights and unnatural sounds: the wide range of ghostly manifestations makes it difficult to find an explanation which will account for them all

BELIEF IN GHOSTS means to many people an unequivocal acceptance of the souls of the dead in sheets and chains, squeaking and gibbering in Gothic ruins. This caricature has grown from second-rate horror stories, films and comic strips, and it remains current in spite of the impressive number of people who go on seeing much less melodramatic spectres.

For instance, a British family were rehoused by their local authority in 1966 because of the effect on their health of strange happenings in their two-year-old council house. The father saw a man's shadow on the stairs where no man was standing; the daughter saw weird lights moving in her room. Police, clergymen and others investigated and found nothing, but no one seemed to scoff; the council produced another house, the priest exorcized the first one, and the *Guardian* reported it all without any of the contempt that newspapers once reserved for such stories.

It may be that belief in ghosts grows out of, and is a response to, some basic and universal human need. The need, of course, is for some assurance of survival after death. In history and prehistory, ghosts were an integral part of religious belief. Religion carried the promise of immortality, which meant that the spirits of the dead had to be taken into consideration.

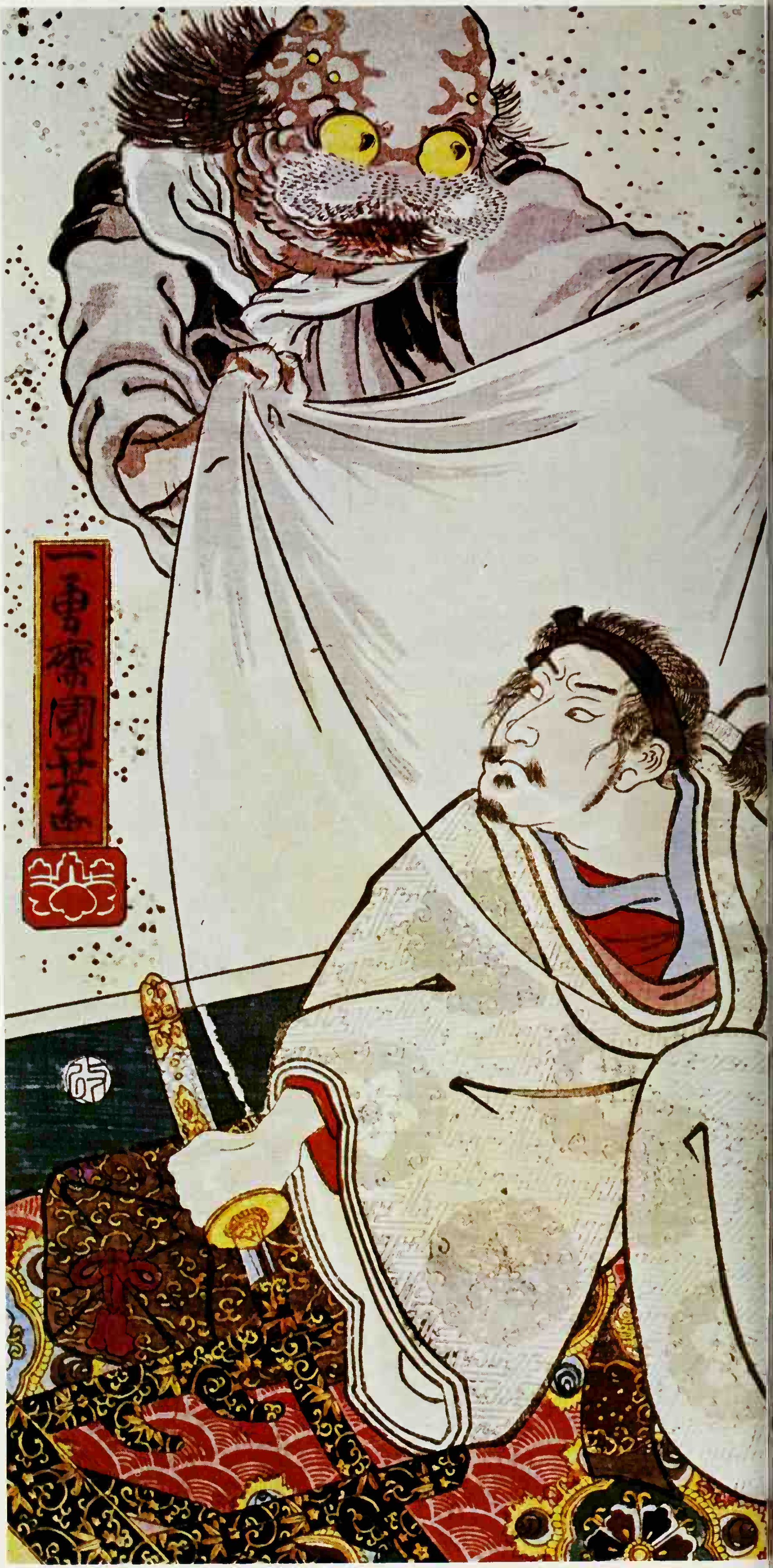
The Ancestral Spirits

Naturally the ghosts of a community's forebears would be the most prevalent. So ancestor worship can be said to be one of the first, perhaps the first, form of religious awareness that developed in man. Even the cave dwellers of the early Stone Age buried their dead with some ceremony, which

Though ghosts are reckoned to be very difficult to photograph, there are hundreds of alleged photographs of apparitions in existence, usually conforming to accepted ideas of what a ghost should look like: 'Yolande', photographed in 1890, wears a veil and drifting shroudlike garments

Popperfoto

In all societies and from the earliest times men have feared the return of the dead. The spirits of the ancestors might be reverenced in Japan, but hostile ghosts *(right)* were still feared *Far right* A lean spectre peers over a victim's shoulder



suggests belief in an afterlife and also some kind of worship of the dead.

Where ancestors are worshipped, they have taken on the role of gods, gaining supernatural power as they enter the supernatural world. Often they are only minor gods, perhaps divine only to their own families. But equally often the forebears can be the major gods of the community. They then become the principal overseers of the tribe's ethical and spiritual welfare.

The ancestors are viewed as protectors, interposing their power between the living and various supernatural evils. More important is the negative view that if the goodwill of the ghosts is not maintained – if the offerings, praises and so on slacken off – the ghosts punish such laxity with calamities like disease, crop failure, accidents and death. If such disasters occur, the tribe concludes that someone has angered the ghosts, and a whole system of appeasement, or *propitiation*, goes into action.

The need to propitiate ghosts is just as important in those primitive societies which do not directly worship their forebears. Some of these societies, many South American jungle tribes for instance, see all spirits as basically vindictive and dangerous, and so requiring propitiation. It is as if the fact of death makes the spirit automatically hostile to the living, whatever its personality while alive. Sometimes the object is not appeasement so much as warding off the spirit: magic spells are set up in a house after a death in the family, to keep the ghost at a distance; or the body is buried in such a way that the ghost cannot find its way back. Ghosts are often believed to have a poor sense of direction: in fairly recent times the bodies of hanged criminals, executed witches and so on were buried at crossroads to confuse the ghosts.

Doomed to Walk the Earth

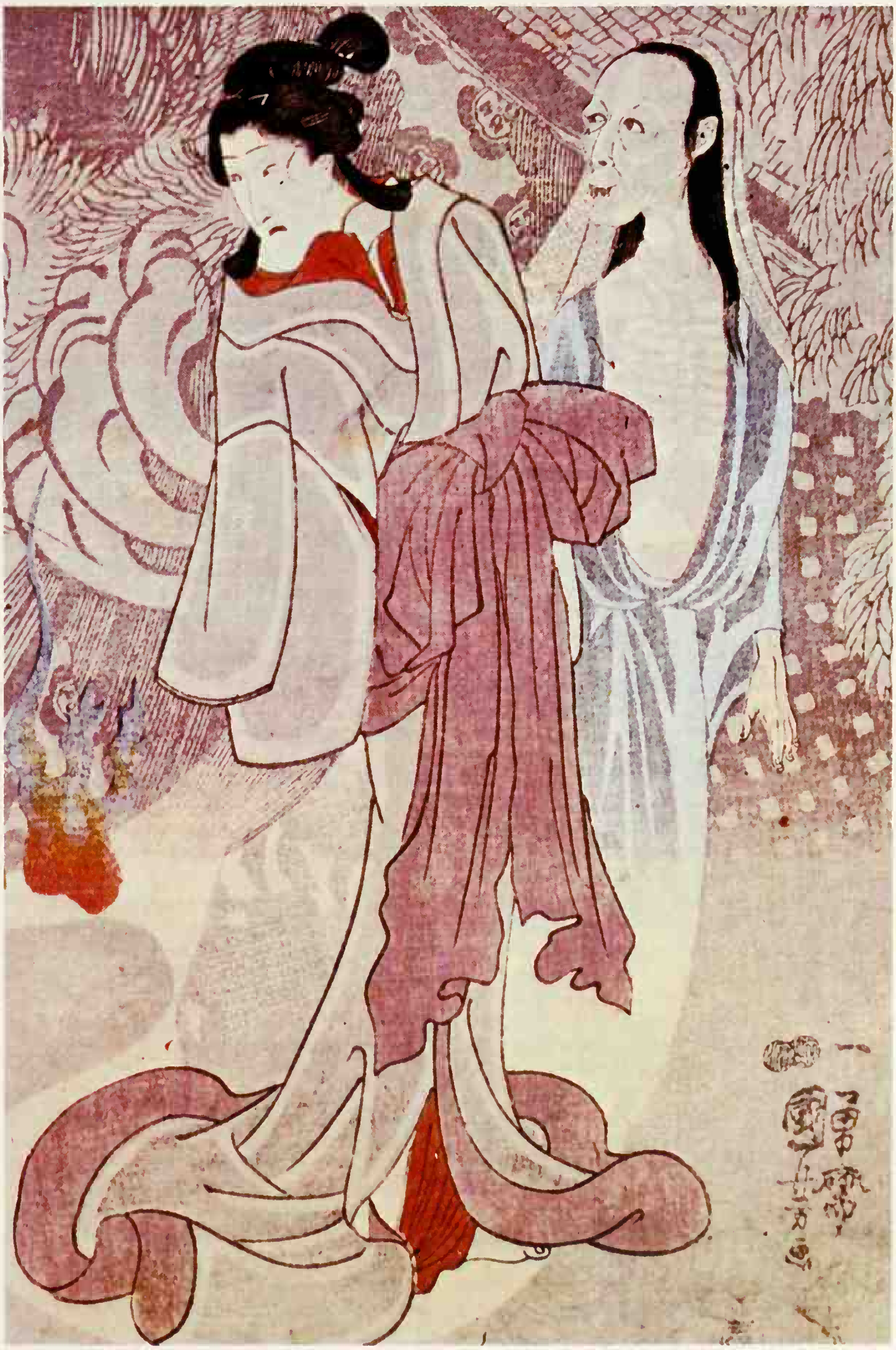
The more complex primitive societies and most civilizations developed the idea of a distinct spirit world – the happy hunting ground, Elysian Fields, Valhalla and the like. They saw ghosts as yearning for these places but being somehow balked. Thus arises the concept of the wandering ghost who infests this world while craving access to the next world and his eternal rest. Ghosts of murder victims remain to harass the living, like Hamlet's father, until vengeance

Victoria and Albert Museum/Michael Holford

A Schoolmaster's Night Visitor

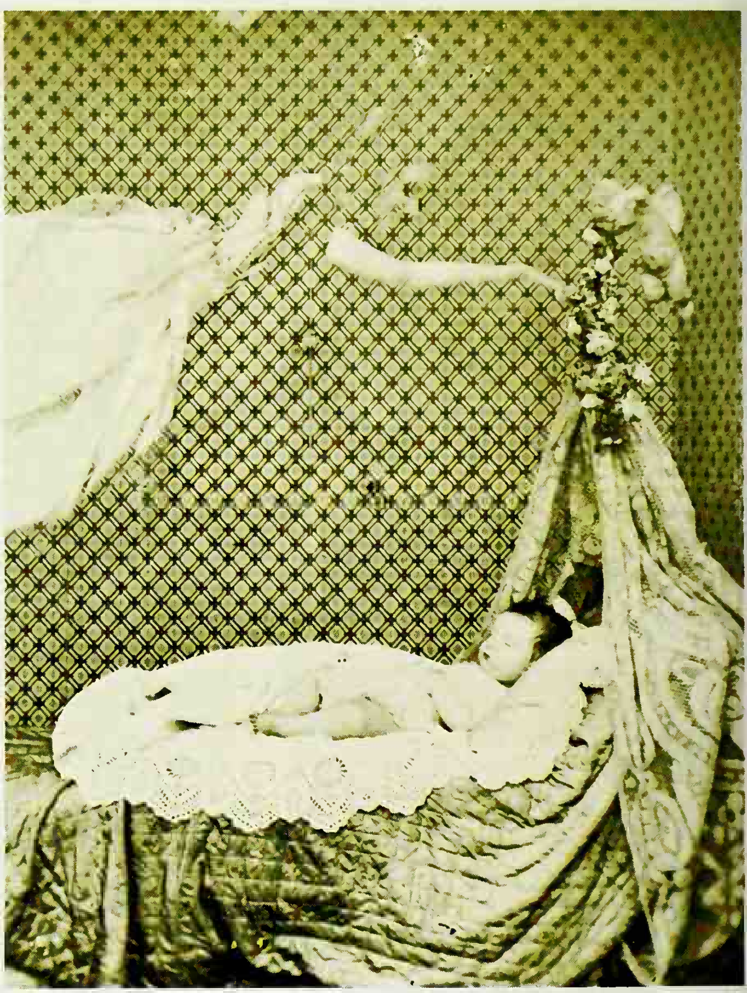
'We – McLeod and I – slept in a dormitory at right angles to the main building. Sampson slept in the main building on the first floor. There was a very bright full moon. At an hour which I can't tell exactly, but some time between one and two, I was woken up by somebody shaking me. It was McLeod; and a nice state of mind he seemed to be in. "Come," he said, –"come! there's a burglar getting in through Sampson's window." . . . Naturally I came and looked, and naturally there was no one there. I was cross enough, and should have called McLeod plenty of names: only – I couldn't tell why – it seemed to me that there *was* something wrong – something that made me very glad I wasn't alone to face it. We were still at the window looking out, and as soon as I could, I asked him what he had heard or seen. "I didn't *hear* anything at all," he said, "but about five minutes before I woke you, I found myself looking out of this window here, and there was a man sitting or kneeling on Sampson's window-sill, and looking in, and I thought he was beckoning." "What sort of man?" McLeod wriggled. "I don't know," he said, "but I can tell you one thing – he was beastly thin: and he looked as if he was wet all over: and," he said, looking round and whispering as if he hardly liked to hear himself, "I'm not at all sure that he was alive." '

M. R. James *More Ghost Stories*



Victoria and Albert Museum/Michael Holford

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library



is done. Ghosts remain also when their bodies have been improperly buried, or not buried at all, as with Odysseus's friend Elpenor. This idea remains strong today: Britain's famous ghost hunter, Harry Price, felt in the 1930s that the main 'haunt' of Borley Rectory would depart once Christian burial had been given to some old bones he found under the Rectory.

The association of ghosts with improper burial reveals another long-lived assumption: that there is a mystical connection after death between the corpse and the spirit. Many of the propitiations aimed at ghosts by primitives are in fact performed upon the corpse or the grave. Offerings are placed at the graveside, and all over the world the dead have been buried with food, ornaments, amulets and weapons for the spirit to have with him after death. Of course desecration of the grave or disturbance of the bones brought instant retaliation from the ghost.

In spite of the various links between corpse and spirit, the notion of a land of the dead became of vital importance, and the corollary idea began to arise that for a ghost to be operating in this world was a clear punishment. Shades of evil-doers remained among the living because they had earned no right to eternal rest. Others, not evil in life, were trapped here if they had been murdered or inadequately buried, or if they had left something important undone. No wonder so many ghosts are supposed to be malevolent; no wonder that moans and howls and shrieks are associated with them, as they bewail their inability to go to rest. There are very few tales, past or present, in which a ghost is willing and happy to stay in this world.

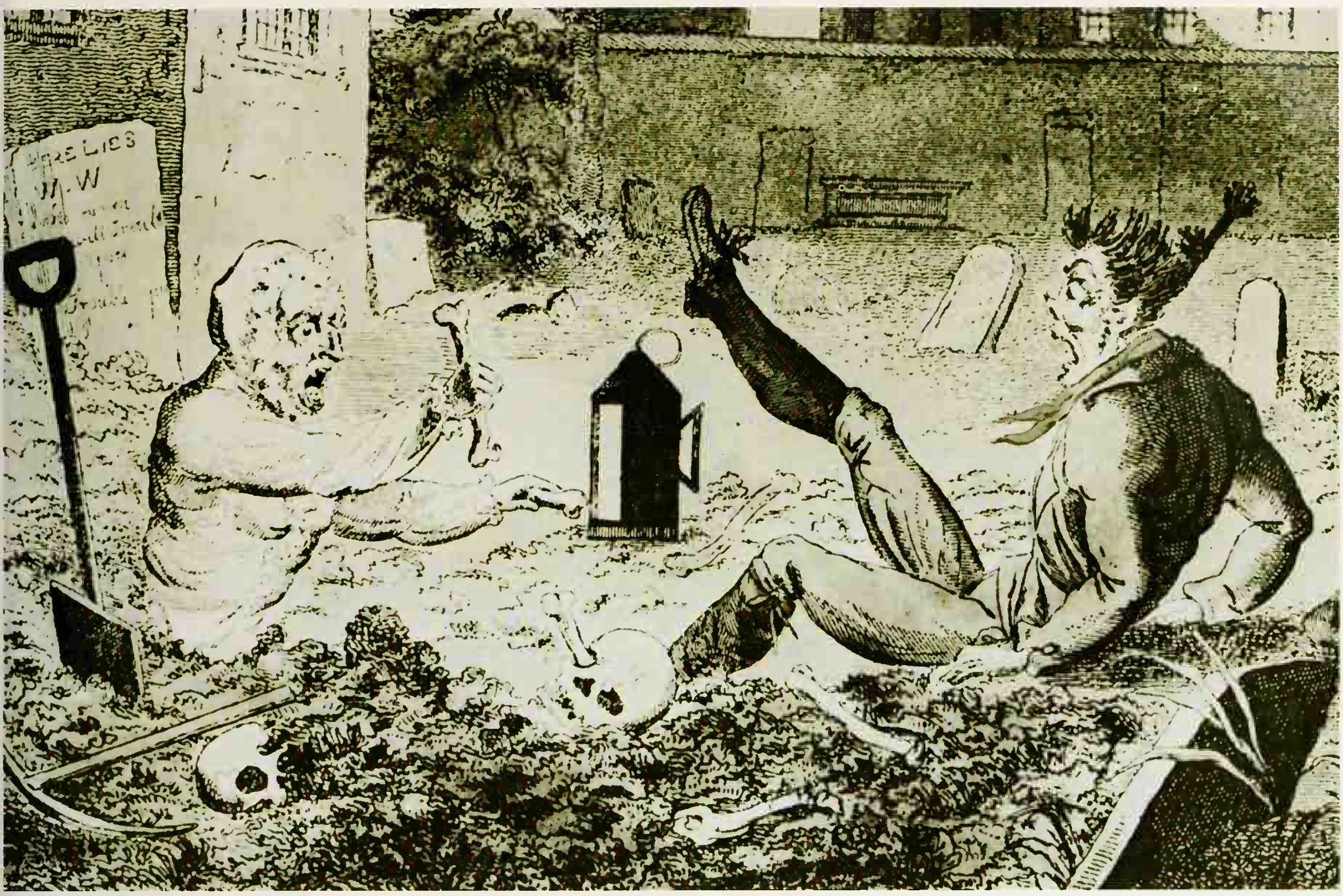
Many of the foregoing primitive attitudes to ghosts and the dead remain in folklore and legend. But the old beliefs about what ghosts look like, and their nature generally, have been added to a little. Primitive ghosts are often indistinguishable from devils, and so may appear as horned giants breathing fire or as unusually large and vicious animals. Such visions do indeed still figure in old wives' tales; but a great many ghosts seen by modern man apparently take remarkably human form. This tendency has been confirmed by various societies of psychical research, which try very hard to take a scientific, clear-eyed view of ghosts. They are at pains to show that most of the more reliable and straightforward accounts of apparitions describe the figures seen as quite ordinary-looking people – three-dimensional, solid and wholly human.

Apparitions of the Living

Many of these accounts are of apparitions of the living, which usually appear at some crisis in the life of the person who is seen. A well-known case illustrates the point: a young Englishwoman living in India in 1917 was startled to see her brother, a Royal Flying Corps pilot, standing in her living room one day. She thought he had come on a surprise visit; only when the brother disappeared did she realize she had seen an apparition. She later learned that it had materialized at the moment when her brother's aeroplane was being shot down over France. Apparitions of the dead (which are often of loved ones or close relatives) share this apparent realness; so do the many other apparitions that have been seen at the point of death of the person who appears.

Two early montages show spirits in *(left)* hostile and *(above)* more benevolent aspects *Right* Interference with a grave was strongly resented by the ghost of the person buried. An early 19th century engraving by George Cruikshank depicts an enraged ghost rising from the earth, a thighbone in each hand, to ward off a graverobber

Sometimes, indeed, the reality and solidity of the apparition is more than visual – as in the case of a bewhiskered ghost in a 19th century Bristol vicarage, who had a nasty habit of entering bedrooms and waking people up by shaking the bed. Or the affectionate 'haunt' of a British stately home, about 1885, who awoke a maiden lady sleeping in the haunted room by bestowing a ghostly kiss. But many other apparitions lack any other aspect of a physical presence than their appearance, and so are all the more frightening. Many accounts mention that the apparition seems to 'glide' soundlessly; few apparitions have left footprints where a flesh and blood person would have done; many have seemed to float well above the ground. Odd clothing is often abnormality enough: strange figures roaming the night become all the more eerie when they are wearing



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

authentic 18th century dress. And terror would mount if they were also seen to walk through a wall or to be transparent.

One compiler of modern ghost stories tells of a company director driving through the British countryside at night, who saw what appeared to be an encampment of Roman soldiers in some woods. He assumed it was a film company on location, until he realized that he could see the trunks of trees through the soldiers' bodies. Nor was he the only person to have seen that ghostly camp. In another case, a tall clergyman was seen regularly to visit a London church to pray: quite unremarkable, thought the vicar of the church, until one day he accidentally bumped into the praying figure and walked right through it.

Apparitions often reveal their non-corporeal nature by suddenly disappearing for no obvious reason. They may also disappear if the living interfere with them. Ghosts may sometimes like to touch people or kiss them or shake their beds, but they seem to object when the living take the initiative. Try to grasp an apparition, to set traps for it, like hidden cameras or powder for possible footprints, and it will vanish. In fact, though there are hundreds of alleged photographs of apparitions, the creatures are notoriously camera-shy.

Some mention must be made of the ghostly occupants of 'haunted houses'. 'Haunts' are, above all, recurrent, walking regularly as clockwork – the same night, the same time, over the same distance. They often take little or no notice of the living (less, anyway, than most of the apparitions which appear only once), but they, too, will promptly disappear if the perceivers try to interfere with them. Haunts generally seem less lifelike than other apparitions; some authorities have described them as 'somnambulistic', even mindless. Patrolling the same area, performing the same actions, they are like a visual record stuck in one groove.

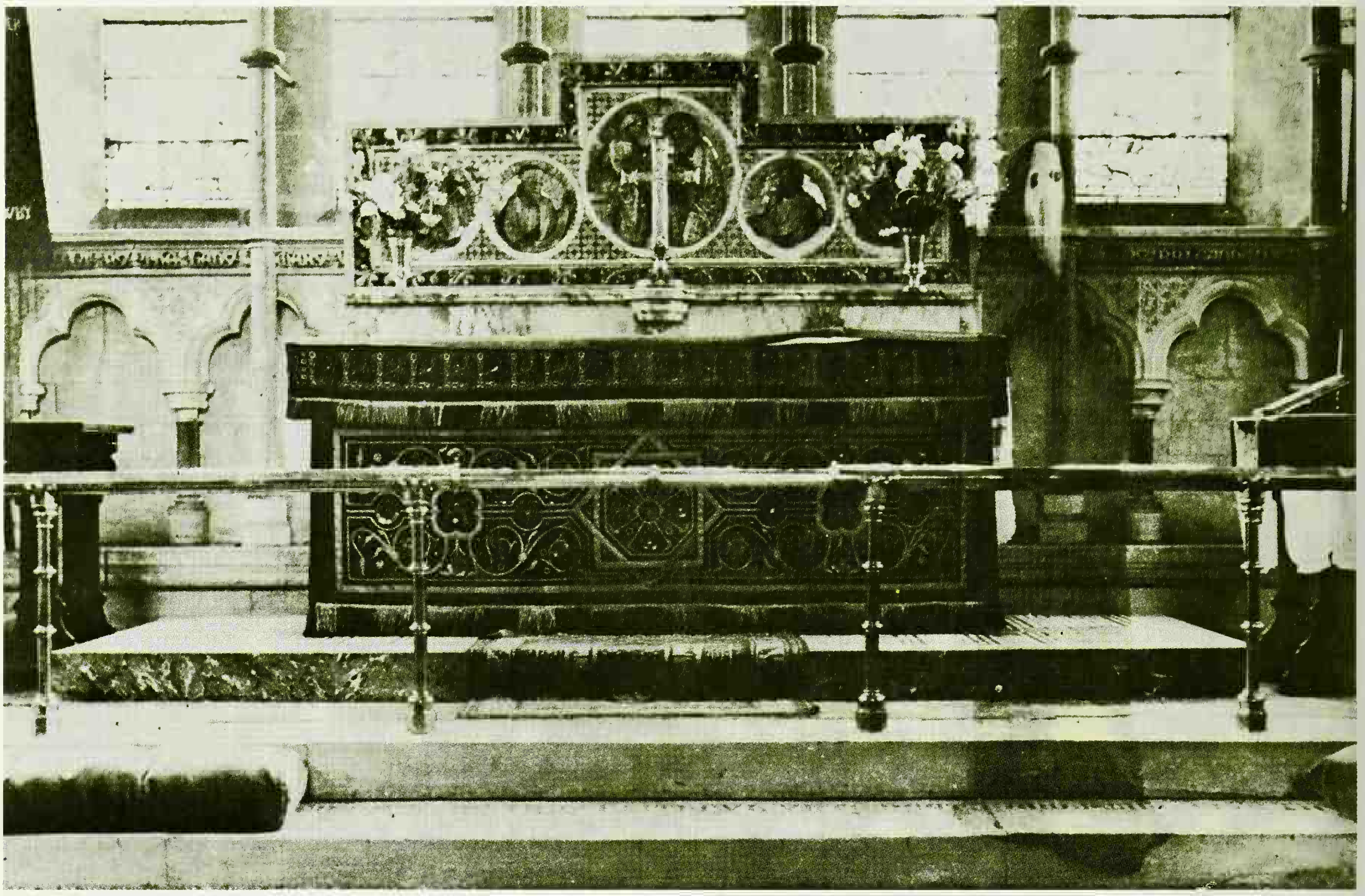
The Sheeted Dead

For every lifelike apparition in psychical research files or in folktale – lifelike even when the illusion slips a little, as when the ghost floats or is transparent – there are at least an equal number of stories of visitations that resemble rather the inventions of horror fiction. These include the female ghost in a Norfolk manor who had empty, fathomless hollows instead of eyes; the faceless woman who haunted a churchyard in Canewdon, Essex; and the bodiless head which in 1953 drove a series of residents from a house in Hamburg, in spite of a cruel housing shortage. Other outlandish horrors carry with them the signs of how they met their deaths, like the victim of drowning who was said to haunt a New Orleans bridge, and who was always seen dripping with spectral seaweed. Numerous cases exist of apparitions in the form of mouldering corpses, even skeletons; these are related to the appearances of ghosts in sheets (in other words the shroud or winding sheet from the grave), which provide further instances of the age-old connection of corpse with spirit.

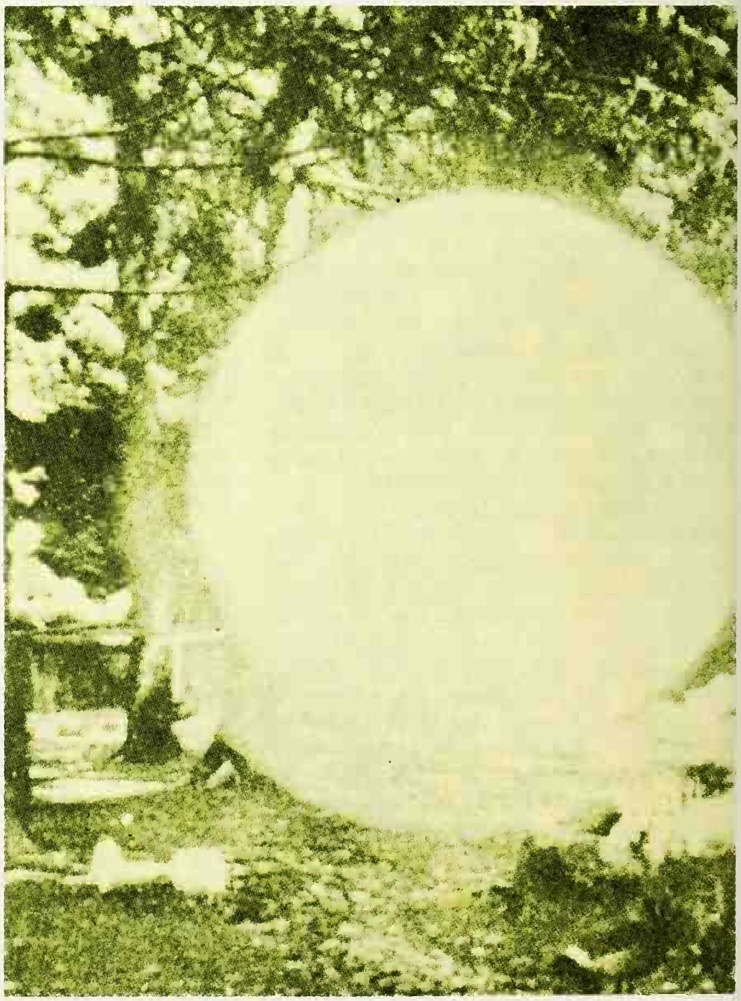
Nor do all apparitions manifest themselves in human or even partly human form. Spectral animals are widely common, with Britain predictably leading the field; dogs figure most frequently in these tales. In many cases the animal ghosts are friendly, but more often they are semi-demonic, like the Manthe Dog that traditionally haunted a castle on the Isle of Man and the ghostly pack of hounds that made Cornwall's moors horrible with their baying. Horses occur in many ghost legends, often with a rider, just as often not; they also are seen pulling phantom coaches. So it seems legends allow inanimate objects a ghostly existence.

Prominent among such objects are various means of transport. Many are phantom ships, including the famous *Flying Dutchman* and the French ship *La Belle Rosalie*. Ghost trains also reappear to rumble through the night on their old runs, whether the railway lines still exist or not. One famous legend concerns the funeral train carrying the coffin of Abraham Lincoln, which is said to roll along a stretch of track in New York State every April, and to have on board a phantom military band playing busily, though its music cannot be heard by living ears.

Apparitions may take much less substantial and well-defined forms than the ones considered so far. For instance, a revenant (one who comes back from the dead) created by some violent death in the past may be



Raymond Lamont Brown



People

***Left* A photograph taken by the vicar of Newby Church in Yorkshire, England, reveals a dark cowled figure standing to the right of the altar. Photographic laboratories have examined the film and confirmed that it had not been interfered with in any way *Below left* Ghosts have always been thought of as fearsome and malevolent: this ghost from an early German film appears as a tall, threatening figure *Below right* Spirits are sometimes said to glow in the dark, and a ghostly manifestation may take the form of a light which has no natural cause; this photograph of a 'ghost light', taken in 1907 at Basel Zoological Gardens in Switzerland, may however be an example of the still mysterious phenomenon known as ball lightning**

not a full-scale haunt but instead take the form of a mere bloodstain. A 19th century tavern keeper in Massachusetts murdered and robbed a traveller one night, but from then on was plagued by bloodstains in the victim's room which could not be removed. Several cases exist of ghostly manifestations in the form of clouds of mist; sometimes, though, the mist will form itself into a recognizable human shape, as happened in France in 1951 when a film writer believed he saw such a mist cloud take the form of the actress Maria Montez.

An Eerie Moving Light

Ghostly lights frequently occur when other forms of apparition are absent, and often contribute to haunted-house legends, as with the flickering lights repeatedly seen round the notorious Borley Rectory during its several uninhabited periods.

It is obvious that an empty house could easily have temporary tenants, such as tramps, exploring children or vandals, who might light their way with flickering candles or matches. Yet the legends go on, related to the notion that spirits sometimes glow in the dark. So, in America, the ghost of a North Carolina railway conductor haunts a particular trestle bridge in the form of an eerie moving light: he had been decapitated near that spot, and the light is said to be his head on an eternal and forlorn search for its body.

With phantoms formed of mist and light must be reckoned the phantoms associated with smoke. Even the smell of smoke can apparently breed ghost legends, as in the story of the 17th century American girl who was burned to death for no good reason, and whose ghostly presence is recognizable by its accompanying pungent odour of smoke. Visible smoke led to another ghost tale being added to the lore of the Tower of London. In 1954 a sentry left his post in pursuit of a smoke cloud that moved as if of its own volition, changed its shape, but did not seem to diffuse or drift like ordinary smoke – until it disappeared with alarming suddenness.

Setting aside apparitions, of whatever shape or form, there is an immense variety of non-visual ghostly happenings. Many of these must be ascribed to the poltergeist: church bells ringing themselves, pianos or organs being played by invisible fingers, weird laughter or screams or footsteps echoing through empty corridors.

Less overtly poltergeist ghosts would include those invisible manifestations that lay their cold hands on people or touch them in other ways, like the kissing ghost mentioned earlier. In Sheffield in 1956 an invisible phantom made itself known to an elderly lady by lying down on the bed beside her, making the mattress sink and the springs creak.

Somewhat closer to the traditional poltergeist, perhaps, is the invisible ghost of a former Bank of England cashier who now tends playfully to disarm the guards; and the Bavarian ghost first heard of in 1949 who gained the name 'Gus the Nazi' when he persecuted women who fraternized with Allied Occupation troops. He was said to have cropped the hair of one girl, with scissors held by his invisible hand, in full view of her parents.

A Sense of Evil

Last of all the categories of ghosts are the totally intangible phenomena which can loosely be described as 'eerie feelings'. In a large majority of cases of clearly seen or heard ghosts, those who have experienced such phenomena have reported a definite sensation of cold, a feature that occurs as often in well-attested psychical research files as in the annals of folklore. But sometimes this chill that has no physical cause can occur entirely on its own, or can occur before the apparition is seen, usually giving the percipient an almost instinctive feeling that something evil or fearful is present.

Animals, particularly dogs, are believed by occultists to be specially attuned to supernatural manifestations; many sensible people have told psychical investigators of their pets' unexplained fear of something that apparently only the animal could see. Dogs, for instance, were often frightened round Borley Rectory, even in broad daylight; and Dennis Bardens relates the story of a modern visitor to Compton Castle near Torquay, whose pet greyhound was riveted to the spot in utter terror of something only it could perceive.

Sometimes such presences make themselves felt without the aid of chills or whatever special senses dogs may have. A 'creepy feeling' – a non-physical awareness of some presence – occurs to a great many people in quite ordinary circumstances. It often happens that someone enters unfamiliar but quite ordinary surroundings (like an empty house or flat visited during a house-hunting excursion) and has a definite feeling of oppression, depression or similar 'atmospheric' reaction from the place. Nor need this reaction be due to any perceptible physical factors, such as poor lighting, dank overshadowing trees, rising damp, atrocious wallpaper or bad smells. Many people have admitted their personal experience of this unpleasant sensation in an apparently ideal dwelling, as if there were some sort of 'psychic emanation' from the very walls of the place reminiscent of past horrors that took place there.

The forms and habits of ghosts may be incredibly varied, but their reasons for returning, the basic purposes behind their presence among us, tend according to folklore to be fairly limited. Many of the reasons for ghosts returning suggested by past and primitive societies can still be found in modern legend. So ghosts can return apparently out of sheer malevolence. Vampires, a special kind of revenant, return solely for evil purposes as, in many tales, do the ghosts of executed witches.

Haunting ghosts seem to return to reenact some crisis scene from their former lives – usually their death. Ghosts in modern lore, as in the past, have been said to return to seek vengeance on their slayers, to punish the living for crimes against them or against their descendants, to seek proper burial, to complete some task left undone or merely to continue one.

The ghost of an American farmer returned for the specific purpose of informing his heirs where he had hidden his will; another American ghost returned to claim what it felt to be rightfully its own. This was the deceased wife of a thrifty New England farmer, whose husband had removed her rings before the funeral, eventually to pass them on to his next wife. But the second wife awoke in terror one night to find the apparition of her predecessor angrily pulling the rings off her fingers.

Quite a number of ghosts have appeared to announce their own deaths, in the 'point of death' form of apparition met so often in psychical research. But others are said to appear as harbingers of someone else's imminent death. The spirit of a deceased loved one might appear to a person, perhaps beckoning; Josephine's ghost apparently came to Napoleon in this way, some days before he died. Or some ancestral figure might appear to the title-holder of a noble family, heralding his death, as a spectral Black Friar was supposed to visit members of Lord Byron's family.

Some stories exist of ghosts appearing because the person has, before death, promised to return in order to indicate the continuance of life 'on the other side'. Dennis Bardens gives several accounts of such promises that were apparently kept, including that of the 19th century Lord Brougham, who materialized in the presence of a friend. Predictably, several people whose lives were devoted to psychical research are said to have returned, or at least to have sent messages back – like the 'spirit writings' transcribed by a medium that were asserted to be from the great pioneer of British psychical research, F. W. H. Myers (see CROSS CORRESPONDENCES).

Tricks of the Senses?

The foregoing must of course be taken as only a broad sample of what people have believed regarding ghosts, their nature and habits. To make some sense of it, we must look at some of the answers that experts have given to the question of the reasons behind this universal belief.

The short answer that is often given is, obviously, that people who see ghosts experience nothing except a temporary derangement of their senses. It is true that our senses do often play tricks on us, when we are in an excitable or suggestible state, or when we are drunk, ill or half asleep.

Phantom of a Living Wife

One of the best-known cases of the ghost of a living person concerns the wife of John Donne, the poet, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral... At the time of this happening, Donne and his wife were living in a house in Drury Lane with a friend, Sir Robert Drewry. King James decided to send a mission by Lord Hay to the court of the French King, Henry IV, and Sir Robert, who also had to go, asked Donne to go with him.

Mrs Donne was expecting a child, and when her husband told her of the plan she expressed the gravest misgivings. She begged him not to go, and he agreed to stay at home – but on Sir Robert's repeated insistence he changed his mind, and his wife, reluctantly, let him go. Sir Robert and John Donne took about twenty days to reach Paris safely. Two days afterwards Sir Robert left Donne alone in a room where they had dined with some friends, and returned to find him in a kind of coma. 'I have seen a dreadful vision,' Donne told him, 'since I saw you; I have seen my dear wife pass twice through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders and a dead child in her arms; this I have seen since I saw you.'

Sir Robert tried to reassure Donne. 'Here Sir, you have slept since I saw you, and this is the result of some melancholy dream, which I desire you to forget, for you are now awake.' But Donne was adamant. 'I cannot be surer that I now live, than that I have not slept since I saw you; and I am as sure that, at her second appearing, she stopped and looked me in the face and vanished.'

The following day Donne's anxiety had not abated, nor his conviction as to what he had seen. Sir Robert, convinced now that his friend had seen something, despatched a special messenger to Drury House to discover how Mrs Donne was and what had been happening, if anything. In due course the messenger returned. Mrs Donne lay very ill at Drury House. After a long and dangerous labour she had delivered a stillborn child – at the very hour of the very day that her husband had seen the distressing vision.

Denis Bardens *Ghosts and Hauntings*

Certainly quite a few accounts of ghosts can be dismissed on this account. The 'creepy feeling' mentioned before in connection with specific houses might be ascribable to a collection of possibly unconscious impressions – signs of decay or odours and the like, not consciously perceived but nonetheless affecting our reactions.

At the very least, no occultist has yet come up with a convincing explanation of why certain tragedies in certain houses should breed these ghostly emanations, or should produce haunts, while others do not; yet there must be a great many houses quite happily occupied today that have tragic or horrific histories. In the same way, one tends to mistrust sightings of ghosts that are traditionally in residence in particular buildings. Too often people see what they expect to see.

Many psychologists tend instantly to dismiss accounts of ghost sightings as the 'product of a disturbed mind'. But for a few men in this field the easy answer does not satisfy. Freud searched for explanations among the repressed relics from our primitive past, the ancient ghost fears of primeval man now hidden within the unconscious mind, but sometimes slithering into conscious awareness. Jung looked for answers in his theory of the collective unconscious, the contents of which can in his view take on almost an autonomous life of their own, being projected or manifested as seemingly outer occurrences.

Both Freud and Jung made it clear that these views should not be taken as complete answers, but more as avenues of approach for psychoanalytic researchers. Other theorists depart from these standpoints, but still share with the two great psychological pioneers the idea that phenomena like ghosts are at least worth the time and effort of study. As the American psychologist William James put it, 'it is bad method to ignore them'. James himself produced one of the more interesting theories concerning apparitions, based on the idea of spontaneously produced hallucinations. Like other psychical researchers after him, he turned to extra-sensory perception – telepathy, clairvoyance and so on – as the possible cause of these hallucinations.

However, even after years of concentrated research into ESP very few conclusions about ghosts have been drawn or could have been, in spite of the mountains of statistics amassed from years of experimentation. So to the layman at least, explaining ghosts in terms of telepathy is of only abstract interest. Nonetheless, it is interesting to find William James describing apparitions as products of our own unconscious minds when they are being stimulated by other minds. This telepathic contact, he says, produces an 'objective' hallucination (as opposed to the subjective kind that our minds can produce by themselves, without help from an outside agency).

F.W.H. Myers had a comparable idea that the other minds did not stimulate our minds directly, but tinkered with part of the environment we were looking at to produce the hallucinatory apparition. Another great British student of the paranormal, G.N.M. Tyrrell, offered the idea that the other minds telepathically affect the sensory apparatus (like the optic nerve) of the percipient, so that the brain receives the message that a ghost is standing there.

Psychons and Astral Bodies

None of these theories accepts the possibility that something with objective reality might indeed be standing there. For these experts, apparitions are hallucinations, however caused. Other theories tend to grow a trifle more fanciful. Students of the occult who recall the many hundreds of accounts of 'astral travelling' – when a person's 'astral self' seems to detach itself from his body and move about, fully conscious and supernaturally mobile – often relate these astral selves to ghosts.

An explanation of haunting has been offered on the basis of psychic emissions analogous to the photons, gluons and other theoretical elements that are supposed to effect the exchange of energy in particle physics; these psychic particles have been called 'psychons', and the theory suggests that they remain in a house, carrying an imprint of a particular scene in some form of psychic energy, which becomes perceptible to certain minds in certain circumstances. Alternatively, there is the suggestion that every piece of matter – whether a person, a dog, or even a train – has an 'etheric' non-material counterpart that exists in 'psychic space', which sometimes interpenetrates physical space and so becomes visible to a percipient.

Most of these theories, acceptable in terms of the frequently occurring 'phantasms of the living', raise difficulties when applied to apparitions of the dead. For if we accept the possibility of telepathically projected apparitions, or astral bodies, or etheric selves, we must accept that these transmissions can also come from the dead; that, in short, a person's mind and psychic qualities can cross the barrier of death.

That means that we must accept the idea of the survival of the individual personality after death. Or, if we balk at that, we must accept the idea of a striking time-lag in the case of post-mortem apparitions – that the telepathy or other emanation came from a living agent, perhaps at the point of death but no later, and did not reach a percipient's mind until some time after the agent's death.

None of these explanations is wholly satisfactory, for none seems applicable to the whole range of ghost lore. It seems likely that the question will remain open until, somehow, man is able to discover what, if anything, transpires after death.

Meanwhile, for whatever reason or amalgam of reasons, people will go on seeing things or have experiences which tradition teaches them to call ghostly. These experiences can apparently happen to anyone, however rationalistic, nerveless, phlegmatic or hard-headed he thinks he is. And hardly anyone has been able to hang on to his total disbelief in such phenomena after having had such an experience, in any form. There is a mystery here which man is no nearer solving than he was when he strung amulets round his hut to keep out the spirits.

(See also ASTRAL BODY; BURIAL; CULT OF THE DEAD; DOUBLE; ESP; HAUNTED HOUSE; POLTERGEIST; VAMPIRES.)

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